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Resources of Resistance:
The Institutionalization of Social, Cultural, and Devotional Capital
in Transnational Migrant Networks

by

Sarah E. White

A Thesis

Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

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Sarah E. White

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Resources of Resistance: The Institutionalization of Social, Cultural, and Devotional Capital in Transnational Migrant Networks

Sarah E. White

Date Approved

Hugo Ceron-Anaya
Thesis Director

Jackie Krasas
Thesis Co-Chair
Program Director

This work is dedicated to:

La Virgen de Guadalupe, Santa Madre de todos los caminos.

Los migrantes, en ambos lados de la frontera.

And to Kathryn Ferguson-

May you rest in peace in a world without borders.

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To my family on both sides of *la frontera*, for a list of things so long I do not even dare to start it.

Above all, to Teo, *con todo mi corazón*.

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly globalized world, political and popular discourse surrounding the phenomenon of transnational migration (particularly from Mexico to the United States) center the decision to migrate at an individual level. Doing so, however, disregards the multi-layered contexts inherent in the historical relationship between these two countries, contexts from which migratory decisions, strategies, and patterns originate. Centering the discussion on individual actions renders invisible how U.S. policies create transnational movements and, in fact, how state policies lead to the formation of intricate, transnational migrant networks. This work explores the necessity and creation of those networks, as well as the social and cultural capital that sustain them. In particular, it examines the roles faith plays among transnational migrants, and argues that spirituality, along with the cultural connections that sustain it, provides migrants with a resource through which they are able to prepare for, undertake, and survive their clandestine journey northward.

INTRODUCTION

Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey, editors of the ambitious collection of data *Crossing the Border: Research from the Mexican Migration Project*, argue and articulate the intricacies of the migratory phenomenon as a social process. From leaving their home communities, crossing a dangerous, heavily militarized border, and settling (if temporarily) in the United States, every facet of a migrant's life is influenced by social capital, inextricably bound to the broader networks of transnational connections on both a familial and national level. Thus, given these connections, for transnational migrants the concept of "home" becomes ambivalent – is home a physical space one inhabits, or is it the place one originates from? Is home where one's family resides, or where one feels most comfortable? And how does one maintain connections to one's home while living in diaspora?

This work argues that these connections are sustained through social and cultural capital, and in particular, capital as manifested in migrants' faith and spirituality. It examines how these forms of capital, in the form of migrant networks, arose from the United States' immigration laws and policies, how migrants utilize social networks throughout their journeys (in leaving, travelling, and settling), and how capital enables migrants to maintain connections with their communities at home, no matter where or how one defines it. By relying on data from the Mexican Migration Project, as well as sociological and anthropological studies of migrant communities in the United States and Mexico, I argue that social and cultural capital, through the form of transnational migrant networks, and particularly through the interconnectedness of faith and spirituality to these

networks, sustain migrants' dignity, hope, and community connections in a transnational life.

These connections allow us to not only understand the origins and continuations of the phenomenon of migration; most importantly, they allow us to recognize the humanity of migrants themselves. We must not continue to speak of migrants and immigrants solely in terms of costs/benefits to receiving countries, or in terms of numerical quotas or estimates that serve no purpose other than to use migrants as scapegoats. We must understand, above all else, that the movement of people from one place to another is not an individual or a whimsical choice, but a choice that is deeply rooted in structural changes in both sending and receiving societies, and that migration, as a response to these changes, is a natural strategy of adaptation that is, at its base, a human and social process. We must understand that migration is not a "problem"; it is a survival strategy.

It is not my intention to impose upon readers any particular viewpoint on immigration reform or border enforcement policy, although I do highlight the effects of certain policies on the lives of migrants themselves. Rather, it is my hope that we can gain an understanding of the ways in which their lives have been drastically changed, and the reasons they make the decisions that they do, including the decision to cross the border without authorization. The study of faith and spirituality is only one avenue through which such an understanding can be reached. I have chosen such an avenue because it is one of the most effective examples in which migrants are able to have their

own thoughts, concerns, hopes, dreams, fears, and voices heard most directly. They deserve that right, and we, at the very least, have the responsibility to listen.

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Throughout this work, I refrain from using criminalizing language to describe migrants and immigrants, terms such as “illegal” or “alien”. In the event that these terms are used, they specifically reference the construction of a state-created category of inclusion and exclusion coinciding with changes in immigration policy. Instead, I employ terms such as “undocumented” which, though still referring to legality, do not carry the same derogatory ethno-racial connotations as the aforementioned. We must be cautious – and conscious – not to describe human beings as “aliens” or as “foreign subjects”. These references only serve to further the association of immigrants with non-human beings, which, in turn, allows us to disregard immigrants’ hopes, fears, and indeed, their very lives.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Though this work relies on a multitude of sources across disciplines, five works in particular provided the base of ideas through which we can connect faith to social and cultural capital.

Crossing the Border: Research from the Mexican Migration Project, edited by Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey, both co-directors of the MMP, provides perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of transnational migration data available. Of particular interest are: analyses of the effects of cumulative causation and the policies of the mid and late 20th century which lead to the necessity and fortification of migrant networks (such as the ending of the Bracero Program and IRCA); patterns between settlement, social capital, and remittances; and social and cultural capital in facilitating border crossing.

A second resource, on a similar note, that this paper relies upon is Deborah A. Boehm's *Intimate Migrations: Gender, Family, and Illegality among Transnational Mexicans*, published in 2012. Although Boehm's work consists of primarily direct interviews, it is her placement of the interviews into analytical context that offers well-rounded research. Boehm focuses particularly on the contradictions of immigration policy that stress family-based visa programs but simultaneously create categories of legality that result in the division of family units, showing how state policies have created the need for transnational networks.

Likewise of invaluable use is Jeanette Rodriguez's *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican American Women*. While Rodriguez rightly examines the historical account of the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe, she highlights that

what is crucial in the account is not so much faith in historicity, but the fact of the existence of faith itself. Although Rodriguez's work focuses on Mexican American women in the United States, I argue that her analysis of the importance of Guadalupe's encounter with Juan Diego, and the dignity and respect she showed him, likewise applies to transnational migrants. It is through this faith in Guadalupe's devotion to her believers that, I argue, links migrants, via cultural capital and community connections, to further forms of social capital.

Similarly, Jacqueline Hagan's "Faith for the Journey: Religion as a Resource for Migrants", as well as *Migration Miracle*, highlight how migrants spiritually prepare to undertake the journey north, specifically by relying on counsel from their faith community – a trust that becomes a form of cultural capital that leads to greater access to social capital. Migrants may receive blessings from clergy, petition at shrines, make offerings for a safe journey, and purchase religious items for their trip. Overall, Hagan's work situates migrants' spiritual resources within the larger networks needed to prepare for and adjust to a transnational life.

Any discussion of undocumented immigrants and the transnational networks they create and sustain remains incomplete without an analysis of the factors and root causes that facilitated the creation of those networks. This work will begin by first examining the factors that lead to a rise in undocumented migration during the last few decades, including the ending of the Bracero Program, the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), and the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which resulted in an increasingly militarized border, changing visa and residency

application requirements, and the shifting of migrant routes into increasingly dangerous terrain. This rise in migration subsequently led to the formation of social networks that spanned the international boundary and facilitated the transmission of social, cultural, and economic capital to transcend these policies. Transnational migrant networks, thus, are a direct result of the increasing presence of the U.S. nation-state.

Following this, I will examine how these transnational networks are sustained and how they correlate with and respond to migratory patterns, placing strong emphasis on how U.S. policies and border enforcement serve to fortify these networks. In these instances, for example, immigrant networks provide potential migrants with crossing advice and guides (known as *coyotes*). Crossing the border is always a social process and depends on a migrant's social, cultural, and economic connections, in order to transmit information such as crossing patterns and how to navigate the networks that traverse them.

Next, and directly informed by the previous discussion, I will specifically analyze how migrant networks serve as a form of social and cultural capital by not only providing a channel for the passing of information, but also by fostering a sense of identity. What are some of the social factors that affect remittances? What are the links between remittances and social, ethnic, or hometown connections? How does the theory of cumulative causation broaden these transnational networks and allow each individual migrant to become a resource for other potential migrants?

After exploring how and why these networks form and operate, I will introduce a discussion of migrant faith and spirituality. I will argue that spirituality and faith provide

migrants with resources, strength, identity, community, and hope, and thus serve as a specific form of devotional capital that allows migrants to enter transnational networks and access a greater degree of social capital. I examine Mexican migration and the faith of Mexican migrants not only because of the deep historic and socio-economic ties between Mexico and the United States, but also because Mexican spirituality, particularly Mexican Catholicism, has a long and unique history that blends colonization and conquest with indigenous beliefs. I make the case for Popular Catholicism as a form of capital due to its frequent deviations from and additions to formalized, institutional Catholicism (i.e. the Catholic Church), especially through the form of special devotions, home altars, and a personal and deep connection with the Virgin of Guadalupe. I further argue that, as a form of capital, faith and spirituality serve as a resource for adaptation and psychological strength during the migratory process.

In arguing the above, I focus particularly on the reasons migrants often feel a strong connection with the Virgin of Guadalupe, primarily that she serves as a symbol of dignity often denied to them during their journey. In briefly recounting the story of Juan Diego and his encounter with the Virgin of Guadalupe at Tepeyac, it is clear that Juan (and, by extension, migrants) sees the Virgin of Guadalupe not as an otherworldly manifestation of the Virgin Mary, but as his equal. She cares for him – she sees his struggles and makes him visible – when no one else does. One of the most common images seen at shrines on migrant trails are devotional candles featuring the image of Guadalupe, indicating that she is a frequent object of prayer and devotion for migrants on their journeys. A discussion of faith and spirituality, then, adds to the conversation not by

discussing what causes migration, but by exploring what sustains migrants themselves. Faith is as cultural and personally symbolic as it is religious, and it can aid migrants on all stages of their journey, from leaving and travelling to settling into a new life far from home.

Furthermore, transnational migrant networks force us to reconsider the definition of where “home” is. Is home a physical space one inhabits, or is it the place one originates from? Home can, among many things, be where the majority of a migrant’s family resides, or a physical or spiritual space where migrants feel most comfortable. Transnational networks as social capital enable migrants to maintain connections to home – however and wherever they define it – while living in an in-between space in which many feel they never quite fit. Broadening our definition of home and viewing migrants and the multiple homes they inhabit as transnational spaces calls attention to the plight of migrants by forcing us to critically uncover the reasons they migrate in the first place. Paying close attention to migrants’ trials and traumas, as well as the faith that sustains them, allows for us to visibly see them not as statistics, or apprehension and deportation figures, but as human beings. It allows us to re-image the migration phenomenon not as an “immigration problem”, as popular and political discourse lead us to believe, but as a new way of thinking entirely. Instead of framing the phenomenon as a random occurrence, or as a split dichotomy between “us” and “them”, we should begin by understanding that migration is a natural, rational, and human response to a specific set of conditions – ones which, especially in the case of Mexico and the United States, are the result of human actions.

Contextualizing Transnationalism: Crossing a Physical and Social Border

Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey (2004a) assert, in their invaluable collection of data *Crossing the Border: Research from the Mexican Migration Project*, that “migration is a social process” (324). This statement, however simple it may appear, contains an interwoven web of questions and answers that spans centuries. In further describing the migratory phenomenon between Mexico and the United States as “transitory, circular, and clandestine”, Durand and Massey (2004b, 4) force us to confront these complex questions and to ask: what (or who) allows this phenomenon be so accurately described in such terms? What are the driving forces behind unauthorized migration, forces that not only created this process, but sustain it?

Before any thorough answer can be reached, it must be clearly understood that *transnational migrant networks* have their origins in and respond directly to *transnational ties* and historical relationships between nation-states. This introduction aims to provide context into the many ways in which the United States’ transnational policies transform the physical U.S.-Mexico border simultaneously into a social border. I argue that failing to understand these contexts results in the misplacing of blame onto individual migrants, rather than the institutional structures, systems, and policies influencing their decisions in the first place.

Massey, Alarcón, Durand, and González (1987) articulate six core principles of international migration that must be examined before proceeding. First, as stressed above, “migration originates in structural transformation of sending and receiving societies” (4). Sociologists have described these conditions as a push-and-pull factor, where changes in

both societies push migrants out of their home country and pull them into the receiving country, with both the push and pull factors being directly related to one another. Second, once this migration stream begins, it naturally propels itself into a cyclical pattern, increasing the networking resources available to potential migrants on both sides of the border. The third principle is that once the migratory cycle is in place, increasingly more families will turn to migration as an active response to limited opportunities. Fourth, as evidenced and concluded by the above three principles, is that as the migratory cycle continues, it becomes a “self-sustaining social process” – the more migrants join the cycle, the faster the cycle grows, and the stronger the network links become (5). The fifth principle affirms that although temporary migration to a receiving country and eventual return to the home country is ideal, some migrants will inevitably settle permanently within the receiving country. The sixth principle, then, is the ideal realized in the fifth: that “networks are maintained by an ongoing process of return migration”, wherein migrants are able to return home for either short-term periods or prolonged stays (6). These principles are key to understanding transnational migration, particularly in the case of Mexico and the United States, where many factors contribute to the continuation and strengthening of these cyclical patterns.

This work focuses on migration from Mexico to the United States for a number of reasons, the foremost being that this migratory flow has always existed due to these countries’ shared history, geographic proximity, and economic ties. As Saskia Sassen (1998) argued, “There is considerable patterning in the geography of migrations, and... the major receiving countries tend to get immigrants from their zones of influence” (8). It

would thus be naive to assume that the transnational policies that shape the everyday lives of Mexicans would not likewise be instrumental in Mexican migrants' responses to those policies by way of the institutionalization of networks, and furthermore, that these transnational policies do not translate into "living within and constructing" a simultaneous transnational identity, one often fraught with "contradictions and complexities" (Boehm 2012, 48).

Indeed, transnationalism remains a central component in the identities of migrants through every stage of their journey, whether a person identifies solely by national origin, hometown, current location, or a hybrid of multiple descriptors, including identifying as having an in-between identity, neither belonging to one place or another (DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly 2010, Massey and Sánchez R. 2010, Hellman 2008). Justo L. González (2004) terms this hybrid as an "exilic experience" that involves a "double presence and at the same time a double alienation" (210). While the above-mentioned scholarship proves insightful, it is Deborah A. Boehm (2012) that truly delves into the transnational identities of migrants. "Migrants understand themselves", she writes, "as belonging to, divided between, and outside of" two nation-states. In interviews and field studies, migrants have described being "*de ambos lugares* / from both places", "*de ambos lados* / from both sides", "*mitad allá, mitad aquí* / half here, half there", "*del otro lado* / from the other side", and perhaps most exilic of all, "*ni de aquí, ni de allá* / from neither here nor there" (6). And just as self-identification can be divided, so too can migrants' definition of home. Home can be the nation one resides in, or the nation one originates from. Home can be one's current living situation, or one's hometown, or one's neighborhood. Home

can also be where the majority of one's family is located, whether on one side of the border or both. In light of the many ways in which transnationalism can impact a migrants' daily decisions and identity, it also forces us to re-think and reconsider what "home" and identity mean in a transnational context (Boehm, 48).

Ironically, just as the United States prides itself on its immigrant past, it simultaneously seeks to deny entry, work authorization, family reunification, and settlement to those it deems "the other", celebrating the contributions of some immigrant groups while denying basic rights to others. We must be willing to critically examine the United States' role in transnational policy-making while, at the same time, understanding how those policies seek to deny entry to the people and spaces that these policies effect. Transnational policies affect not only migrants' home communities but also the borderlands, transforming what the United States is constructing as a physical line of demarcation into a social boundary. Transnational policies are turning a physical border into a social one by determining who is allowed to occupy certain spaces, how these spaces will be divided, and how they affect the identities and daily actions of those who live and struggle under its effects. (De La Torre 2016, 1; Nevins 2008, 25). Nevins (2008) describes these effects as the essence of nation-statism – that it is in the state's power to determine, based on a person's geographic and social location and on which side of the boundary they reside, what resources they have access to, where they have authorization to go and for what purpose, and the degree to which they can live their lives (186).

Ignoring this complex transnational narrative erases the complexity – and the humanity – that is at the heart of transnational migration itself. My objective is not to debate the intricacies of international trade policies, economic incentives, cost/benefit analyses, or whether immigrants are “good” or “bad” for their receiving societies. My objective is, instead, to reframe the narrative to focus on the human voices that these types of debates intentionally ignore. While I stress the importance of critically examining transnational policies that cause international migration, any such examination completely misses the mark if we fail to realize the humanity of the people that these policies affect and the very real and human decisions they make as a result.

Any discussion of how the border region came to be so heavily socio-politically divided must begin with a brief overview of the border’s history. Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821 and faced a new set of challenges as a new country, including the defense and protection of its northern territories – particularly of Texas – which were geographically quite far removed from the capital of Mexico City. As a result of such difficulties, Mexico agreed to allow the continued entry of American, pro-slavery settlers into the territory, as had been policy under Spanish rule. However, Mexico outlawed slavery in 1830 and prohibited further immigration into Texas, although extralegal settlement continued regardless. Furious with the abolition of slavery and immigration restrictions, Texas asked to be annexed into the United States in 1837, a request which the U.S. eventually granted in 1845. The annexation, of course, enraged Mexico and in the ensuing debate over the territory’s boundaries,

In early 1846, President James K. Polk, also a supporter of slavery, deliberately provoked Mexico by sending troops to the Rio Grande. (From Mexico’s

perspective, this constituted an invasion.) Soon thereafter, skirmishes between U.S. and Mexican troops ensued, quickly resulting in full-scale war... for two years, the war raged on, largely in favor of the United States (Nevins 2008, 81).

The war ended in 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, “by which Mexico ceded about 40 percent of its territory to the United States” – including what would become part or all of the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Utah, Nevada, and California (81). The geographical and political divide that today constitutes the border between Mexico and the United States, with minor exceptions, is largely the result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the tense and complex social, political, and economic relations and exchanges between the two neighboring countries that resulted from its implementation.

In speaking of this modern divide, by nature of its exclusionary principles and practices, the border “is a state-sanctioned system of violence: physical, environmental, economic, and cultural” (Davis 2002, x). Saskia Sassen (1998) further elaborates on the border’s symbolic violence by calling attention to the principle traits of immigration policy: that the physical border wall (and, by extension, the border region in general) and individual migrants are targeted as “sites for regulatory enforcement”, effectively erasing the role of the state in creating the border, its policies, and transnational catastrophes in the first place (7). As Boehm (2012) has argued, by focusing on migrants as individual actors, we disregard the contexts that shape their decisions. “A focus solely on the actions of individual migrants obscures central players in the structuring of transnational families: the U.S. state and its agents, and particularly how state policy and practices play out in the lives of migrant families” (61-2).

If, therefore, as previously argued, social networks shape the migratory process and the lives of immigrants, we must first begin by asking: what shapes social networks? What policies, laws, or programs affect how these networks are born and function? Answering these questions requires that we take a step back from our U.S.-centric perspective. The question is not “what are those people doing *here*?”, but rather, who migrates, and why? (Hellman 2008, 10). Or, as Ched Meyers and Matthew Colwell (2012) succinctly state, “If we are going to talk about how undocumented immigrants impact *our* society, we ought to first address how our national policies have disrupted *their* lives” (14; emphasis in original).

The Historical Origins of Transnational Migrant Networks

This work began by presenting the case for viewing the U.S.-Mexico border as both a social and physical divide. Failing to understand how U.S. policies create this social divide results in placing the blame for transnational migration solely onto migrants themselves and erasing the structural policies that facilitate their migration. This chapter argues that the relationships and ties between the United States and Mexico not only intentionally created this divide, but likewise facilitated the creation of and reliance on transnational migrant networks. It does so by critically analyzing the United States' guest-worker policies, legislative measures, and border enforcement strategies in order to understand their impact on migrants and their families. I will explore how, as Saskia Sassen (1989) eloquently stated, "the very measures commonly thought to deter immigration... seem to have had precisely the opposite effect" (814). Before analyzing the intricacies of the migratory networks themselves and how they are sustained (the focus of the following chapter), we must fully understand the roots of U.S.-Mexico relations, otherwise we will fail to understand why transnational networks became a necessity in the first place.

Justin Akers Chacón and Mike Davis (2006) argued that "concomitant with the 'denationalization' of the global economy is the 'renationalization' of politics in the form of an intensive, state-directed orientation on border enforcement and immigration restriction" (95), a point similarly articulated by Mae M. Ngai (2004) – that is, that foreign policies between countries necessarily lead to and have a firm hand in the development of immigration policies (9). To push this argument one step further is not

only to implicate, but also to draw explicit connections between the nation-state and the creation of the concept of migratory illegality. The category of the “illegal alien” is a direct result of U.S. border enforcement strategies that seek to encourage the transnational movement of goods and services, such as the dynamics of supply and demand in the agricultural sector, while simultaneously (and hypocritically) restricting the transnational movement of the people who respond to those dynamics (Davis 2002, xi; Massey and Sánchez R., 38; Nevins 2002, 11; Ngai 2004, 6). An examination of these double-sided and contradictory policies uncovers their direct contributions to the formation and institutionalization of transnational migrant networks.

Initial U.S. legislation in 1921, followed by the passing of the Johnson-Reed Act in 1924, restricted the flow of European immigration by implementing a strict quota system based on national origins: the total number of immigrants admitted to the United States per year was capped at 2 percent of the number of immigrants from each nation residing in the U.S. as of 1890. However, these restrictions did not place limits on immigration from Mexico, primarily due to a high demand for labor in agricultural fields, especially in the U.S. Southwest. Excluding Mexico from the quota system thus allowed U.S. employers to “bridge the gap” caused by the quotas for Southern and Eastern Europe (Massey, Alarcón et. al. 1987, 42; Ngai 2004, 23). This effort to fill the labor shortage in the agricultural sector led to the formalization of a guest-worker system known as the Bracero Program. Between 1942 and 1964, the Bracero Program “gave official sanction to the use of migration to satisfy the needs of the United States and Mexico” in such a way that “endorsed the mass northward movement of Mexicans for over two decades”

(Akers Chacón and Davis 2006, 111). Mae Ngai (2004) describes the Bracero Program as a form of “imported colonialism”, a “de facto socio-legal condition embedded in formally non-colonial relationships and spaces” (129), where workers in Mexico would *voluntarily* be contracted to work temporarily in the United States and would return home at the end of the growing and harvesting seasons.

It did not take long, however, for the demand for Bracero contracts to exceed their supply. In spite of a lack of authorization, and with the guarantee that work would be available to them in the north, migrants increasingly left Mexico for the United States, in larger numbers and without documents. Indeed, undocumented workers were often encouraged to enter the U.S. alongside contracted workers – this benefited both the workers (to whom the promise of work was fulfilled) as well as the employers, who did not have to deal with additional program paperwork or contracting fees (Massey, Alarcón et. al. 1987, 55; Ngai 2004, 148). The numbers themselves speak volumes: as Akers Chacón and Davis (2006) highlight, “the undocumented flow of labor soon eclipsed the stream of bi-nationally negotiated braceros. Between 1947 and 1949, 74,600 braceros entered the fields”, while the number of unauthorized migrants alongside of them rose to 142,200 (146). Not surprisingly, braceros and undocumented migrants were frequently related to each other and would migrate to the same job together, with undocumented migrants relying on the social connections of his relative to secure employment (Ngai 2004, 150).

As contracted braceros and their undocumented friends and family adjusted to the complexities of transnational life and their semi-frequent returns to Mexico and the

United States, they became, as Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002) term, “a significant stock of migrant-related social capital”. During the two decades in which the Bracero Program existed, “hundreds of thousands of braceros were able to familiarize themselves with U.S. employment practices, become comfortable with U.S. job routines, master American ways of life, and learn English” (42). This knowledge translated into social capital – resources upon which potential migrants could rely, thereby reducing the costs and risks of unauthorized crossing and increasing the crossing’s potential benefits. Considering, too, that the Bracero Program recruited workers from all across the interior (particularly rural communities) of Mexico, each time a bracero or his undocumented counterpart returned home, he instigated or expanded the availability of social networks in his geographical area.

However, the termination of the Bracero Program in 1964 did little to curtail unauthorized migration, and, in fact, resulted in the further increase of gendered migratory patterns. Men had been contracted as farmworkers during the Bracero Program, and with the Program’s termination, the Mexican government initiated the *Programa Nacional Fronterizo* (PRONAF), or the National Border Program. PRONAF’s initial aim was to increase tourism to border cities; however, an outgrowth of PRONAF known as the Border Industrialization Program (BIP), launched in 1965, provided for the rise in *maquiladoras*, or export-processing factories often owned by international companies, where the government hoped that former (male) braceros could find work opportunities (Nevins 2010, 56). *Madquiladora* owners, however, preferred to hire female workers due to presumed levels of “manual dexterity and naiveté” and,

subsequently, their exploitability: “they suffer physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; are subject to forced overtime and illegal hiring and firing practices, such as being fired without pay, and have no recourse if they are hurt on the job” (Téllez 2013, 235). These unethical labor practices serve only to maximize corporate profits. As Téllez (2013) found,

The city of Tijuana currently has forty-seven industrial parks, each of which employs two hundred thousand workers on two twelve-hour shifts. The evidence of disparities becomes abundantly clear when the minimum wage is 54.80 pesos (\$4) per day and a gallon of milk cost approximately 45 pesos (235).

From the United States’ perspective, the Border Industrialization Program and the *maquiladoras* would be able to provide sufficient incentives to decrease or eliminate unauthorized, international migration.

Employers’ preferences for hiring female workers, however, did nothing to solve the problem of the uncountable number of authorized and unauthorized male *bracero* workers who were now unemployed. The BIP, in actuality, appears to have had the exact opposite effect of what it had intended. Davila and Saenz (1990) suggest that *maquiladoras* merely act as another “push” and “pull” variable, pulling workers to the northern border region in hopes of employment (which they are increasingly unable to find) and subsequently pushing them into the United States, where they know employment will be available (97). This has especially led to an interesting development in gendered migration patterns, as Broughton (2008) found: “although Mexican men are much more likely to take the adventure *across* the border, women leave rural areas for border cities like Reynosa at comparable and, from some places of origin, greater rates than men” (581) – especially in the case of young, unmarried women. Although a study

of migration and gender is not the focus of this work, the connection is crucial, particularly in this instance, in highlighting the faults of believing that international trade policies can control unauthorized immigration by obscuring migration's root causes in the first place.

The termination of the Bracero Program and the introduction of *maquiladoras* intended to fill the rising unemployment rate did not take into account the simple fact that transnational migration is, at its core, a social process which facilitates connections across the international divide. Joseph Nevins (2008) articulates the continued existence of “the mutual interdependence between U.S. employers... and Mexican sending communities”, and just how closely these two remained intertwined – so much so to the extent that the “previously legal migratory stream simply went underground” (137). Although the Bracero Program was officially over, the employer/employee connections had already been established, and employers knew that the demand for cheap labor in U.S. agricultural fields could be easily filled with a steady supply of unauthorized workers. The same migratory patterns and trends continued, and “the authorities and the general public were ready to look the other way as long as the fields continued to be sewn” (Hellman 2008, 7). The ending of the Bracero Program in 1964, then, first initiated the modern, institutional phenomenon of northward migration from Mexico to the United States.

In response to the increase in unauthorized immigration following the termination of the Bracero Program, the United States Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986. IRCA contained four targeted provisions: an increase in

resources available to the U.S. Border Patrol to aid in enforcement; penalizations for employers who “knowingly hired unauthorized workers”; an offer of amnesty for long-term undocumented residents; and a further legalization program specifically for agricultural workers (Cerrutti and Massey 2004, 19). It is crucial to discuss specifically the provision regarding penalizations for employers, for IRCA made it illegal for employers to “*knowingly* hire unauthorized migrant workers” [emphasis in original] and “required them to make a good-faith effort to attest to the immigration status of their employees” (Nevins 2008, 106). Employers, however, rarely extended any effort to do so, and instead chose to circumvent the issue altogether by shifting from direct hiring practices to utilizing subcontractors, who acted as middlemen between employers and workers. Frequently, these subcontractors were former braceros who were granted amnesty under IRCA and thus were able to move freely between the two countries and easily recruit workers from the interior of Mexico for work in the United States (Massey and Sánchez R. 2010, 96).

The system of subcontractors not only shifted all responsibility for legality away from U.S. employers and onto the subcontractors themselves, thus eliminating any penalties employers would have potentially faced – it also increased and strengthened the transnational movement of undocumented workers, necessitating a simultaneous increase on the reliance of social capital in the transnational migratory process. More migrants settling in the United States with some form of legal status translates into a greater number of resources undocumented migrants may utilize, such as living arrangements and employment, especially if the relationship between documented and undocumented

migrants is determined by familial ties or hometown origins (Bankston 2014, 77; Cerrutti and Massey 2004, 40-1; Kandel 2004, 250; Riosmena 2004, 265-6).

Additionally, as with the Bracero Program, many migrants without documents simply chose to follow their documented family and friends northward. Smith (2006) describes the spike in migration of undocumented men, but particularly of their dependent wives and children, as an “exodus” in which undocumented migration stems from a cause-and-effect scenario of legal migrants acting as “proxies” (46). As Cerrutti and Massey (2004) have pointed out, “IRCA seems to have pulled into the migrant workforce many Mexicans who would not otherwise have left for the United States” (25). Indeed, in their analysis of trends in both documented and undocumented migration between 1964 and 1994, they found that a high frequency of fraud within the agricultural workers program (which theoretically should have only offered legalization to those workers who could prove past U.S. experience) caused many Mexicans to migrate northward without documents “specifically in the hopes of being legalized” (25). By claiming to (or at least, giving the public the appearance of) toughening its stance on unauthorized entries, Congress’s passage of IRCA resulted not only in large-scale legalizations of prior workers and their families, but also in the transnational crossing of large numbers of undocumented workers, both of whom continued their own migratory patterns and expanded networks for future, potential migrants.

In addition to the increase in migratory flows resulting from the Bracero Program and IRCA, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), implemented in 1994, also had deep, far-reaching effects on undocumented immigration. Calling NAFTA’s

effects on Mexico a formation of a “de facto economic colony” to the United States, Joseph Contreras (2009) discovered that “Mexican exports to the United States more than quadrupled, from \$39.9 billion in 1993 to over \$170 billion in 2005”, while “annual U.S. exports to Mexico have nearly tripled, from \$41.6 billion in 1993 to \$120 billion in 2005” (7). However, this increase in trade between the two countries far from benefits the majority of residents – in fact, he found that approximately “90% of new foreign investment under the treaty has gone to only four of Mexico’s thirty-two states, and three of them are located along the U.S. border” (95). NAFTA has worsened economic inequality in Mexico by benefitting U.S.-owned companies, such as the *maquiladoras* that operate along the border, while at the same time decreasing opportunities for residents from the rural interior, many of whom, in the year of the treaty’s implementation, were subsistence farmers.

As Sassen (1989) argues,

“Perhaps the single most important effect of foreign investment in export production is the uprooting of people from traditional modes of existence. It has long been recognized that the development of commercial agriculture tends to displace subsistence farmers, creating a supply of rural wage laborers and giving rise to mass migrations” (820).

Over one million jobs were lost in Mexico’s agricultural sector due to NAFTA, further highlighting that “the rural poor have borne the brunt of adjustment to NAFTA and *have been forced to adapt* without government support” (Contreras 2009, 96; emphasis added). Farmers in Mexico chose migration as a response to such policies because they do not have either the economic capital to sustain their own forms of income or the social and cultural capital necessary to acquire it. Thus, they adapted as they had for decades – by

relying on the ever expanding social and capital that they did have; that is, through the undocumented migratory networks.

The hypocritical actions of United States force us to confront the irony of expanding the market for free trade while denying entry to the human beings who labor under its exploitative conditions. Intentionally coinciding with NAFTA, border enforcement strategies such as Operation Gatekeeper called for an increase in militarization and additional Border Patrol agents in major crossing sectors. Under the guise of “prevention through deterrence”, agents hoped that, faced with the prospect of circumventing these sectors and crossing through a dangerous and hostile desert, potential migrants would assess the benefits and risks associated with such a crossing and choose to remain in Mexico, rather than undertake a more dangerous journey. However, as Joseph Nevins (2008) has argued, the prevention through deterrence strategy “is an assumption with little basis in fact, one with often deadly consequences” (116), for in fact, militarization strategies such as Gatekeeper did not curb unauthorized immigration – it merely increased its danger and shifted it out of visible sight. Just as the Bracero Program and the provisions of IRCA encouraged unauthorized migration, Operation Gatekeeper theoretically attempted to regulate “boundary-related illegality”, while in reality it has only served “to construct and perpetuate illegality” (Nevins 2002, 13).

The presence of the U.S. nation-state is visible through the physical structure of the militarized border region, tightened immigration policies, workplace raids, detentions and deportations, and the bureaucratic application process for visa and residency applications. However, it also has direct implications for crossing patterns, migrant

routes, and the strategies and resources needed to navigate them. Deborah Boehm (2012) explains that:

State policies have changed and restructured family transnationally, impacting length of stay, creating geographic divisions, and encouraging families to reunite outside of formal or “legal” means... directly because of state policy and practices, migration to and from the United States actually divides families and undermines family structures (56-7).

Heightened militarization along the U.S.-Mexico border decreases the frequency of return migration for those without documents, and causes migrants to remain in the United States for longer periods of time (Durand and Massey 2004, 12). Rather than discouraging migrants from crossing initially, the high costs (monetarily, physically, and psychologically) of border crossing “simply discourages them from going home”. Mexican agricultural workers in the U.S. between 1987 and 1992, for example, averaged a temporary stay of 8 months, whereas workers migrating after 1993 tended to stay, on average, 42 months (Kandel 2004, 247).

This chapter examined the United States’ foreign policy initiatives that directly led to an increase in unauthorized migration. It highlighted the structural forces, programs, and enforcement strategies that facilitated the mass, transnational movement of migrants, and argued that this transnational movement is deeply rooted in the historical relationships between the United States and Mexico. Without understanding these relationships, it would be impossible to understand why migrants make the decisions they do. The following chapter uses the contexts of these relationships to explore how transnational migrant networks serve as social and cultural capital to respond to these policies.

Transnational Networks as an Exercise in the Utilization of Capital

The previous chapter explored the historical relationships and policies between the United States and Mexico, and argued that these relationships facilitated the transnational movement of migrant workers between the two countries on a massive scale. I turn now to examining the specifics by which migrants respond to these policies by the formation and strengthening of social networks. I analyze how these networks are an exercise in the utilization of social and cultural capital, and how they assist potential migrants in preparing for their journey, leaving home, and crossing the border into the United States, proving that policies enacted with the intention of limiting unauthorized migration actually resulted in increasing it. I will use the theories of social capital, cultural capital, and cumulative causation, as well as researched data from the Mexican Migration Project, to explore how migrants are connected to their networks, and further, how they utilize the resources available within those networks.

In this work's ultimate goal of exploring spirituality and faith as resources for migrants, it is necessary to first contextualize the source of their spirituality and place it firmly within "their [migrants'] social location, the trials they endure and the wounds they carry as immigrants" (Groody 2002, 5-6). The migratory process is a deeply traumatic one, from the pressure to immigrate, breaking from family, crossing a perilous desert, and adapting to a new country. As Daniel Groody (2002) eloquently explains:

In the process of leaving Mexico, crossing the border, and entering into the United States, undocumented Mexican immigrants experience nothing short of a walk across a border of death. Even when they do not die physically, they undergo a death culturally, psychologically, socially, and emotionally. Their journey involves an economic sentencing, whereby they have to shoulder the difficult responsibilities of leaving family, home, and culture for an unknown

future in the United States and the search for a job with meager wages. The Mexican immigrant experiences an agonizing movement from belonging to nonbelonging, from relational connectedness to family separation, from being to non-being, from life to death (32).

To disregard such a dramatic transformation is to disregard the immigrant as a human being, in much the same way as popular discourse disregards them by referring to them as “illegal aliens”. And while such discourse simultaneously disregards the economic changes and policy factors discussed previously, it also erases the cultural influences, network connections, and the theory of cumulative causation that make transnational movement bearable (Rivero-Fuentes 2004, 202). I turn now to an analysis of the “resources of resistance” (Spener 2009, 23) – how migrants respond to determining factors by the utilization of the social capital of these networks and influences – in order to more fully understand the roots of Mexican immigrant spirituality and faith.

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu coined the term “social capital” to refer specifically to “the way in which social relationships constitute a resource to individuals and groups that can grant them access to other types of resources possessed by people with whom they have relationships” (Spener 2009, 23). Social capital functions in conjunction with cultural and economic capital and can be acquired by groups or individuals and exchanged for other forms of capital – social capital, for example, can be exchanged for economic capital or cultural capital, and vice versa (23). In terms of the migratory process, these forms of capital acquire specific meanings and benefits. William A. Kandel (2004) refers to these circumstances as “migration-specific human capital” and argues that the “skills and abilities” garnered through migration “render a person better able to cross the border, find housing, and obtain a U.S. job” (246). Multiple factors

determine how much of this capital migrants are able to accumulate and are based on a migrant's previous experiences in the United States, varying from their most recent trip, its duration, and overall number of trips taken. Kandel (2004), for example, studied patterns among migrants' U.S. occupations and discovered that, generally speaking, agricultural workers engaged in trips with the shortest duration, but migrated more frequently due to the seasonal nature of their work. Non-agricultural workers, however, including both skilled and unskilled laborers, generally engaged in less trips, but were more likely to stay in the U.S. for longer periods of time and therefore accumulate a larger amount of migration-specific human capital. He concluded that, because of the temporal nature of agricultural work and the necessity of frequent crossings, agricultural workers were able to provide potential migrants with resources specific to crossing the border, while non-agricultural workers acted as resources for job placements and settlement (246).

The social relationships of which Bourdieu spoke influence the motives behind the acquiring of capital and the manner in which it is exchanged. Social capital can derive from: values, such as familial and friendship connections; hometown solidarity, as a means of benefitting the community as a whole; reciprocity, such as helping a friend or family member migrate under the expectations that the favor would somehow or someday be returned; and, as Spener (2009) terms, "enforceable trust", such as when a border crossing guide's (known as *coyotes*) communal or profession reputation is on the line (180). The reliance on these relationships, whether they are between friends, family members, or *coyotes* and the migrants who utilize their services (which will be discussed

shortly), “provide information that may reduce risk, or at least perceptions of it” (Sheridan 2009, 62). In other words, it is crucial to rely on relationships and networks composed of a person or persons in whom migrants believe they can trust. The people with whom a migrant or potential migrant associates “heavily influence that person’s [the migrant’s] understanding of the risks and the potential outcomes” (7). Or, as a woman named Patricia explained, “More than anything else you have to pick the right people, you don’t just travel with whoever. You find someone who you know or who other people in your family know or someone your friends know are a good person” (62).

To further reduce the anxieties of risk and danger, migrants have “three distinct dimensions” of social capital that link them into a migrant network: informational resources, such as information about or assistance with the migratory process; sources of that information, such as prior migrants or non-governmental agencies, and recipients of the information, such as themselves or other potential migrants, including friends or family members (Garip 2008, 592). These dimensions combine to form the most basic structure of a migratory network, which benefit not only migrants in their hometowns prior to migration, but also those in the areas in which they will settle in the United States. As Massey, Alarcón, Durand, and González (1987) elaborate, “migrant networks consist of social ties that link sending communities to specific points of destination in receiving societies. These ties bond migrants and non-migrants within a complex web of complementary social roles and interpersonal relationships” (139). Even a person who has never migrated and has no plans to migrate is considered to be in a migrant network by the simple fact of knowing someone or being related to a person who has already

migrated, although having a relative who has already migrated generally increases the likelihood of taking an initial trip (Rivero-Fuentes 2004, 202). Indeed, as Elizabeth Fussell (2004) discovered, “in rural interior communities... specifically, having a parent with U.S. experience raises the odds of making a first U.S. trip by 86 percent, whereas having a migrant sibling increases the odds by 252 percent” (160).

Relying on these networks and relationships proves crucial during the migratory process as migrants call upon the resources available within these networks to not only cross the border, but settle in the United States. Some instances of reliance that migrants often report utilizing are: advice on where, how, and when to cross the border; recommendations for reliable *coyotes* with good reputations and affordable rates; lending money without interest or at very low interest rates for necessities or to pay the *coyote*; and providing new migrants with housing, food, and employment connections after their arrival in the United States (Spener 2009, 166). Spener (2009) includes data from the Encuesta sobre Migración en la Frontera Norte de México as evidence, citing that:

Of clandestine migrants who had last crossed the border into the United States in the 1998-2003 period, 68 percent had friends or relatives living in the U.S. city where they had worked for the longest period of time. Of those migrants who did have friends or relatives in the same U.S. city, 57 percent had received a cash loan from social network members, 97 percent had been provided food and/or shelter, and 79 percent had received help finding a job (167).

It is clear that without network support, newly arrived migrants would have a much more difficult time not only in their physical journeys to the United States, but also in their psychological and economic adjustments.

However, social networks do not only aid migrants during their transnational movement and transitional adaptations – they also provide valuable services once they

have settled in the U.S. and attempt to maintain connections to those they have left behind in Mexico. Social networks allow for the sending and receiving of goods and information between the two countries, which increases the resources available to both migrants and potential migrants and thus transforms into additional social capital. Furthermore, “migrants invest their remittances to establish a solid basis” of community membership, both increasing their reputation in their community and directly supplying them with needed physical resources (Mooney 2004, 45). Potential migrants still residing in Mexico then seek out the resources sent and facilitated by their *paisanos* (countrymen) living in the United States.

In a study sample conducted by Massey, Alarcón, Durand, and González (1987), migrants from the four Mexican communities of Altamira, Chamitlán, Santiago, and San Marcos reported relying on friends or family members for financial assistance. In Altamira, 50 percent turned to friends and 25 percent turned to relatives. In Chamitlán, over 75 percent turned to friends, while only 6 percent turned to relatives. In San Marcos, however, only 20 percent turned to friends, while 40 percent called upon relatives and 30 percent called on other *paisanos* (151). Similarly, as William A. Kandel (2004) discovered in his analysis of selected measures of social capital by occupation over three periods (before 1987, 1987-1992, and after 1992), the percentage of unskilled workers that remained in contact with relatives increased from 63 percent to 69 percent, and the percentage who received housing from friends or relatives also increased from 77 percent to 82 percent. The percentage who relied on family or friends for employment increased

across all skilled, unskilled, and agricultural laborers, up from 64 to 65 percent, 70 to 73 percent, and most drastically, 43 to 68 percent, respectively (249).

Indeed, as Elizabeth Fussell (2004) explains, “having made a first trip to the United States, a male household head has acquired knowledge about how to cross the border and where to find housing and employment”, serving as “a form of migration-specific human capital” (164). As migration increased after the passages of IRCA and NAFTA, reliance on this capital became increasingly necessary. This knowledge and financial assistance can include, as stated previously, access to border crossing guides and information and the economic capital necessary to seek them out. Without such assistance, potential migrants would likely be unable to migrate, or would do so with significantly more stress and anxiety about their situation, especially if a person migrates without the use of a guide and thus increases their risk of apprehension and even death. It is to this institutionalized network of assistance in the form of border crossing advice and crossing guides, known as *coyotes*, which I now turn.

David Spener (2009) articulates this formal definition of *coyotaje*: “Coyotaje is the set of border-crossing strategies and practices elaborated by *coyotes* at the behest of and in concert with migrants, migrants’ friends and family members, and/or migrants’ U.S. employers” (95). Further, it is “a social process that is embedded *in networks of social relations* and underwritten with social capital and cultural funds of knowledge” (163, emphasis added). Thus, *coyotaje* is not simply a set of two-way exchanges, such as the exchange of economic capital for a border crossing, but rather proves to be an interconnected relationship that involves not only *coyotes* and the migrants who employ

them, but also potential employers as well as migrants' friends and family on whom they may rely for economic assistance. As a vast network, then, Spener (2009) explains *coyotaje* as a "network of people with relationships among them" without necessarily having one, single leader orchestrating the facilitation of services (174). This both broadens the resources available to migrants and potential migrants, as well as broadening opportunities for the *coyotes* themselves to provide more services, thus increasing their profit of both social and economic capital.

Coyotes offer services that can be categorized into three broad groups, which Spener (2009) terms "bureaucratic evasion", "labor brokerage", and "clandestine border-crossing services" (94). *Coyotes* not only lead migrants across the border, although this is how they are frequently described in popular and political media – they also help migrants bypass the legal system through the acquisition of falsified papers and by acting as labor contractors. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, for example, promoted bureaucratic evasion *coyotaje* by increasing the demand for identification and work authorization documents, of which *coyotes* provided forged copies (114). In terms of labor brokerage, as discussed previously, many *braceros* had undocumented relatives that chose to follow their contracted family members northward, *braceros* thus assuming the role, even inadvertently, of *coyotes*. For the purposes of this paper, I will specifically discuss the details of border-crossing services.

Remembering that social capital requires a deep, interconnected network of relationships, *coyotaje* transportation services such as border crossings rely on connections on both sides of the border. The *coyote* first needs a recruiter, or someone

who will connect migrants with the *coyote*. In many instances, the *coyote* can assume the responsibilities of a recruiter, especially when the person seeking the *coyote*'s services is a friend or family member. The *coyote* will also need someone to physically cross the migrants through the desert, whether that crossing guide is the *coyote* himself or someone working for him. Then, the *coyote* needs to have connections in border cities or just beyond, someone who will transport the migrant from the desert to their destination, if close by, or to a safe house, which the *coyote* requires to shelter or hold migrants until they are able to continue to their destinations (153).

As discussed previously, NAFTA and the "prevention through deterrence" method of border enforcement did not curb unauthorized migration, but merely shifted it out of visible sight by pushing migrants into increasingly dangerous terrain. As such, many sociologists have drawn direct correlations between the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border and migratory crossing patterns. With an increase in militarization and number of Border Patrol agents, migrants face a higher risk of detection, detention, and deportation than prior to NAFTA and Operation Gatekeeper's implementation (Sheridan 2009, 1). In order to avoid these risks, migrants must rely even more on the specific social capital found in border crossing advice and guides (Donato and Patterson 2004, 113). The social capital available within migrant networks "reduce the cost [economic and psychological] and risk of migration" (Mooney 2004, 45-6) through the accumulation and exchange of multiple forms of capital, such as in the transfer of economic capital in return for the social capital necessary in border crossing (Spener 2009, 164). This is not only a simple exchange of services, but a responsibility in what Bourdieu called

“economy of practices” and what Spener (2009) reimagined as the “economy of *coyotaje* practices” (164). A migrant is not only responsible for choosing a trustworthy and competent *coyote* who knows well the crossing routes and strategies; *coyotes*, too, are responsible for maintaining that trust by safely and successfully crossing a migrant into the United States, an exchange which Bourdieu referred to as “symbolic capital” (Spener 2009, 174). Migrants frequently expressed their concerns with finding a reliable and responsible *coyote*, as Lynnaire M. Sheridan (2009) explains

A migrant’s social network is crucial to selecting a *coyote* because the fundamental prerequisite of a safe *coyote* is that you know him and you know people he has safely crossed to the United States. The more vulnerable the potential migrant, the more you need to trust the *coyote* and the more you are willing to pay to ensure safe delivery to loved ones (63).

If a *coyote* breaks the trust with the migrants who seek his services, he risks not only his professional reputation, but also his reputation among *paisanos* both in his hometown and in the United States, a bond referred to as *paisanaje*.

Reputation and reliability among *paisanos* increase in importance when migrants from the same regions in Mexico settle and work near each other in the United States, a shared bond that Massey, Alarcón, Durand, and González (1987) refer to as “*paisanaje*” (143). They explain that

Origin from the same place is not a meaningful basis of social organization for people while they are at home. In general, within the community itself, the concept of *paisanaje* does not imply any additional rights and responsibilities to other *paisanos* that are not already included in the relationships of friend, family member, or neighbor. It is not a meaningful concept until two *paisanos* encounter each other outside their home community. Then the strength of the *paisanaje* tie depends on the strangeness of the environment and the nature of their prior relationships in the community (143).

In the case of migrants with very little U.S. experience, then, *paisanaje* becomes a great source of strength and responsibility as they adapt to the customs and conditions of their new, if temporary, home. A migrant named “Tomás” (an alias) explained that it greatly helps newly arrived migrants to migrate or reside with someone who has made prior U.S. trips because, in his case, fellow *paisanos* helped him figure out the bus routes in Los Angeles, knowledge which he, in turn, passed on to his fellow immigrants – providing his own form of social capital (Hellman 2008, 74-5).

Paisanos from the same hometowns in Mexico have also formed hometown associations while living in the United States, which allows them not only to live among members of their communities but also to continue those communities’ traditions (Hellman 2008, 36). These associations reinforce *paisanaje* and allow for the social responsibility of all members of the community to, for example, send remittances back to their families or contribute funds for a community project. As will be discussed later in depth, hometown associations and *paisanaje* also contribute to religious festivities and devotions both in the United States and home in Mexico. *Paisanos* from “San Rafael” (name changed in original source for safety), a town in Puebla, Mexico, for example, organized with their hometown association to gather funds to repaint their town’s church and restore the devotional images within its interior (Hellman 2008, 36).

At its most basic social function, *paisanaje* gives hometown members a source of courage and strength in diaspora in both physical and psychological ways. As “Carlos” (an alias) explained, “You’ve got to have people here, brothers, cousins, friends from your hometown, because there’s no way you could eat, pay rent, and buy a warm jacket

unless you share with other people” (Hellman 2008, 128). In describing another migrant’s experiences, Judith Adler Hellman (2008) said, “He says he feels safer if he can live among people from his own country, people whose behavior he can understand and who can understand him” (xix). Thus, *paisanaje* is not only necessary, but practical and comforting, allowing migrants to feel less like strangers in a strange land. I turn now to elaborate on the theories that allow for the flourishing of and reliance on *paisanaje* – the theories of cumulative causation and the culture of migration.

Fernando Riosmena (2004) articulated three basic migratory strategies that respond to binational pressures, such as NAFTA and the economic changes it imposed on rural Mexico: temporary migration, recurrent migration, and settled migration. As a migrant “moved from the former to the latter category, migratory experience and the number of social ties in the United States increased” (267). These increases in social ties naturally lead to an accumulation of transnational social capital, which, due to an increase in migratory activity, foster additional social ties. As Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002) explain:

The way in which social capital accumulates over time to perpetuate international migration represents a specific manifestation of a broader process that has been described as the cumulative causation of migration... each act of migration alters the social context within which subsequent migration decisions are made, thus increasing the likelihood of additional movement (20).

Massey and Sánchez (2010) describe cumulative causation as a “positive feedback loop” (38-9), wherein successful migratory strategies yield extensive social capital among both past and future migrants, broadening the networks and increasing the likelihood of migration (Arias 2004, 181; Garip 2008, 591; Rivero-Fuentes 2004, 201). Each migrant

affected by these networks subsequently becomes a resource to others who would not otherwise have access to them, “turning migration into a self-perpetuating process” (Rivero-Fuentes 2004, 203). Furthermore, as Cerrutti and Massey (2004) discovered, once a person has migrated to the United States, he or she becomes increasingly likely to migrate again in the future, a figure they estimate to be around 50 percent (26).

The formation of daughter communities in the United States furthers the process of cumulative causation. These communities are more easily able to direct their resources to their towns of origin and provide prospective migrants with the most opportunities and security. Transnational networks, especially in daughter communities, “support the circulation not only of people but of money, ideas, and values”, which in turn promotes what Massey and Sánchez R. (2010) term “the culture of migration” (12). This theory proposes that, as more and more migrants depart their hometowns and settle (even if temporarily) in the United States, their continued remittances positively affect their hometowns’ social relationships and economies and result in promoting additional migration (Massey and Alarón et. al. 1987, 153; Durand and Massey 2004, 10). Even if an individual family does not have relatives living in the United States, they still benefit, although indirectly, from remittances sent by other families that aid in stimulating their town’s economic growth. Margarita Mooney (2004) chooses to refer to this theory slightly differently, calling it “the migrant syndrome” – she proposes, in a similar vein, that visible consumption patterns will lead others in the town to view migration in a positive light, eventually leading them to migrate north, as well (46-7).

What is notable, however, as Flores, Hernández-León, and Massey (2004) argue, is that a culture of migration, or the migrant syndrome, “functions independently of its original economic causes”, aligning it with the theory of cumulative causation (185). While economic policies such as the Bracero Program and NAFTA may have initially instigated the mass transnational movement of undocumented workers, the current phenomenon is a self-perpetuating process that is influenced less by economic disadvantages and more by the simple fact that migration has transformed and become an integral part of daily life (185). For a family unit with members on both sides of the border, the impacts of migration can be felt by the ability to afford more than basic necessities but also by the empty seat at the dinner table and the loneliness and alienation a migrant feels living away from his or her family – a separation that has become increasingly common.

Such loneliness and alienation are the results of distinctly gendered migratory patterns, with “predominantly male households in the United States and largely female households in Mexico” (Boehm 2012, 41). Durand and Massey (2004) explain that these gendered patterns indicate a desired goal of migrating only temporarily to the United States and returning to Mexico sooner rather than later. If a male migrant leaves his family behind, it is more likely that he plans to return in a short enough time that, logistically and economically speaking, it is more sensible for his wife and children to remain in Mexico (6). However, as we have seen previously, the increased militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border causes migrants to take trips of longer duration and remain in the U.S. for greater lengths of time. As a result, “although males are typically the first to

migrate from a Mexican household, the more trips a man takes and the longer he remains north of the border, the more likely he is to be joined by his wife and children” (8).

Bearing in mind that “the family is the basic social institution”, I turn now to examining concrete links, kinship ties, and the social and economic capital transmitted by migrants across the U.S.-Mexico border (Massey, Alarón et. al. 1987, 198).

Over 95 percent of undocumented immigrants are reported to maintain some form of contact with relatives in their countries of origin, whether that contact is maintained through a land phone, cell phone, calling card, email, or regular mail, although land phone (87.3 percent) was the most common (Massey and Sánchez R. 2010, 149). And, economically speaking, as Margarita Mooney (2004) discovered, “a stronger identification with place of origin tends to enforce social norms to repatriate U.S. earnings” (60). Maintaining connections with relatives and friends strengthens their bond and allows for clearer communications regarding what kinds of goods and services are most needed or desired in migrants’ hometowns. Some services, such as money-transfer centers, internet cafés, and *paqueteros*, are migration-specific (Hellman 2008, 186). *Paqueteros*, as their name suggests, deliver physical goods between hometowns in Mexico and relatives living north of the border. The owning of legal documents allows *paqueteros* to more easily cross between Mexico and the United States and set up binational businesses that cater specifically to migrants, creating a form of migration-specific capital exchanges (185). Migrants in the United States request necessities such as birth certificates, but also request “nostalgia items” such as photographs and videos of events at home, or homemade food and religious objects that, although available for

purchase in the United States, do not hold the same effect as those from Mexico. As one migrant named “Manuel” (an alias) explained:

The food parcels, as people would say in the United States, are more or less our bread and butter. Even though Mexican delicacies... are available in stores in New York, it’s amazing how much migrants here will spend to eat their mother’s tortilla or their mother’s *mole*, even if these foods – freshly made – are all on sale up and down East 116th Street in Manhattan... tortillas and tamales made with real white corn, preferably from the *milpa* of a relative, is probably the most prized food that anyone can receive (Hellman 2008, 187).

Paqueteros are a necessary manifestation of social capital, then, as they directly provide goods and services between the two countries (which contributes to the culture of migration).

More frequent communication directly contributes to the maintenance of migrants’ hometowns, especially in the form of financial support (Badillo 2006, 191). Migrants’ remittances allow for the installation of phone lines, road construction, internet access, and church and school building renovations – especially in rural communities, where maintenance by the government is infrequent (Hellman 2008, 35-7). Robert Courtney Smith (2006) conducted an extensive, binational study, for example, between the town of “Ticuni” (name changed by Smith) in Puebla, Mexico and its daughter community in New York City, and discovered an extensive list of projects conducted over the past three decade by the town’s migrants. Some of the projects include:

1977-79: Constructing a primary school
1980-82: Repairing and refurbishing the church after earthquake damage
1984-87: Constructing a secondary school
1985: Contributing to the digging of a community well
1988: Making additional contributions to the digging and setting up of another deep community well, with drainage
1991-92: Beginning the potable water project, after several years of discussion (Smith 2006, 56)

Interestingly, undocumented migrants were 8.6 percent more likely to send remittances than their documented *paisanos* (individual percentages being at 82.3 and 73.7, respectively). They were also 30 percent more likely to remit on a monthly basis, with undocumented migrants remitting at a 54.9 percent monthly rate and documented migrants remitting at a 24.9 percent monthly rate, with “a majority of all respondents (52 percent) said that they sent money at least once every six months” (Massey and Sánchez R. 2010, 160).

Margarita Mooney (2004) uncovers clear connections between gathered data on remittances and migrants’ social ties (57). For example, migrants who rely on other *paisanos* for housing or other forms of social inclusion such as religious organizations are more likely to invest in lasting projects in their hometowns, such as home construction, due to the nature of these social ties and the responsibilities and expectations they carry:

Migrants use their remittances both to make a status claim and to make an investment. Migrant networks promote investment in a home or productive activity both because such investments constitute a more visible and durable status claim than consumption and because they are a way to improve a migrant family’s economic condition (Mooney 2004, 47).

Clearly, migrants’ reliance on their social networks allows them the benefits not only by decreasing the risks associated with border crossings, as discussed previously; this reliance also allows for greater reassurance and belonging while living away from one’s family. The more migrants feel as though they have a secure safety network on which they can rely on during the migratory process, they more likely they will be to remit earnings to their hometowns and, as a result, directly contribute to the culture of

migration, drawing more and more potential migrants into migratory networks and ensuring the continuation of the self-sustaining process of cumulative causation.

This chapter examined how migrants respond to international policies by the formation of and reliance on social networks. I analyzed the ways in which these networks are an exercise in the utilization of migration-specific capital, and how networks are a critical asset for both past and potential migrants in preparing for and undertaking the migratory journey. I further explored how cumulative causation operates independently from the initial processes that initiated mass migration, and how the cultural of migration increases the reach of social networks to include not only migrants themselves, but also their families and communities that are effected by and benefit socially, culturally, and economically from the migratory process.

After contextualizing the world of international migration and the processes and theories that initiated and sustain it, I turn now to exploring how faith and spirituality serve as additional resources for migrants in the form of cultural capital (through such institutions as the Catholic Church) that can result in an increase in social capital, in addition to what Elaine A. Peña (2011) terms “devotional capital” – “ways of remembering, knowing, interpreting, and coping” that define and shape a migrant’s daily life (11). While social networks and resources are undeniably helpful in the migration process, I argue that it is migrants’ faith, spirituality, and convictions that sustain them psychologically. While the suffering and trauma they experience during their journey is necessary to first contextualize their spirituality in order to give due attention “to their wounds as well as their aspirations” (Groody 2002, 15), we must understand that crossing

the border is not just a political, social, or economic process, but also a religious one that allows migrants, in the words of Leah Sarat (2013), to “make sense of their suffering” (3) – a process to which I now turn.

Faith as a Resource: Pathways to Social and Cultural Capital

In the previous chapter, I discussed the “resources of resistance” upon which migrants and potential migrants draw in order to navigate the complex social and cultural processes of the migratory journey (Spener 2009, 23). Migrants, by the formation of transnational social networks, are able to actively respond to international policies in ways that benefit both their hometowns and areas of settlement socially, culturally, and economically. Importantly, I highlighted the social aspect of these networks, and stressed that the migration process is not an isolated, individual decision, but rather a structural one that affects migrants’ families and communities, tracing its roots back to direct U.S. involvement and its disruption of traditional modes of existence in rural communities. Without this contextualization, any discussion of migrants’ faith and spirituality would fall short.

This chapter looks at how migrants’ faith and spirituality serve as additional resources during the migratory process – specifically, I examine how faith links migrants into networks through cultural capital, and how cultural capital leads to an increase in social capital, particularly migration-specific capital. I do so by first asking: why examine migrants’ spirituality, particularly what is known as Popular Catholicism? Why does the Virgin of Guadalupe hold such importance for migrants, and how can Guadalupe and Juan Diego, the indigenous farmer to whom she appeared, serve as spiritual support? How then can spirituality, through institutional religion, serve as cultural capital that can lead migrants into circles of social capital? Analyzing the connection between faith and

capital leads directly into the following chapter: the formation (and my elaboration and expansion) of what Elaine A. Peña (2011) calls “devotional capital” (11).

As Jacqueline Hagan (2008b) rightly exclaimed, while many studies have examined the roles of religion and religious institutions during immigrant settlement, very few have given such attention to the roles of religion during the migratory process itself (6). However, the roles that religion and religious institutions play in migrants’ leaving and travelling, and the resources and support they provide, are just as crucial to understanding migrants’ faith and spirituality. No examination of their faith during settlement and adjustment would be complete without first undertaking an examination of how their faith has sustained them on the journey to settlement in the first place.

As Hagan (2008b) argued, “religion does not explain why the individual people decided to migrate... yet, as a powerful guiding, coping, protective, and mediating force, religion did shape how these migrants... experienced the journey, and... how they made sense of their place in the migration process” (156). Indeed, sociologists, ethicists, and scholars of religion have drawn poignant theological comparisons between migration and Biblical faith. Peter C. Phan (2008) compared Christ to migrants when he wrote that “Jesus is the paradigmatic migrant who dwelt between the borders of two worlds” (38). Father Flor Maria Rigoni, a Scalibrinian priest living in Tapachula, Mexico who has dedicated his life to migrant rights, went even farther to declare that “the migrants are the wandering God” (Hagan 2008b, 102). But while these descriptions pave the way for theological reflection, this reflection must not be our starting point – we must begin by first examining migrants’ faith at its roots, inseparable from its contexts and history.

In one study sample of 202 undocumented migrants, Jacqueline Hagan (2008a) reported that 147 respondents – 74 percent of the sample – identified as Catholic. Forty percent (n=80) stated that they attended church approximately once per week, and 27 percent (n=54) responded that they attended several times per week (Hagan 2008a, 16). In a deeper analysis of the same data, Hagan (2008b) further found that 35 percent of respondents (n=70) participated in community religious activities (11). However, in terms of home-based religious practices, she discovered that 24 percent (n=48) practiced one form of activity, 25 percent (n=50) practiced two, 10 percent (n=21) practiced three, and 18 percent (n=36) practiced four or more (11). Taken together, these percentages conclude that 77 percent of respondents participated in some form of home-based religious activity, clearly indicating the centrality of faith and spirituality in their daily lives.

The frequency of home-based spirituality is a central feature of Popular Catholicism – the form of the institutional religion practiced among the everyday populations that differs in varying degrees from what is officially sanctioned by the Catholic Church (Sánchez Walsh 2004, 12). Examples of Popular Catholicism in practice can include devotion to saints, the use of material objects in prayer, and in particular, a special devotion to The Virgin of Guadalupe (13). Terming this devotion *Guadalupanismo*, Alyshia Gálvez (2010) argues that it “is the most salient, well known, and widespread aspect of religiosity in Mexico” (2), and so it is to *guadalupanismo* that I turn, examining the origins of Guadalupan devotion and the significance and symbolisms behind the narrative of her appearance.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is reported to have first appeared to Juan Diego on the morning of December 9, 1541 on the hill of Tepeyac, while he was walking to mass in what is now Mexico City. After addressing him as “the smallest of my children” and “you the dearest of my children”, she requests him to travel to the palace of the bishop, relating that

I have a living desire that there be built a temple, so that in it I can show and give forth all my love, compassion, help, and defense, because I am your loving mother: to you, all who are with you, to all the inhabitants of this land and to all who love me, call upon me, and trust in me. I will hear their lamentations and will remedy all their miseries, pains, and sufferings (Rodriguez 1994, 31).

The bishop denies Juan Diego’s request. Believing he has failed, he returns to Guadalupe, saying “You have sent me to walk in places where I do not belong” (32). Guadalupe persists, and the still-doubtful bishop requests physical evidence of her appearance, and so Guadalupe provides Juan Diego with flowers not yet in season as proof of her miracles. When Juan Diego approaches the bishop on December 12, 1531 to present the flowers, he unfolds his cloak to uncover a miraculously detailed portrait of the Virgin of Guadalupe – which, according to legend, is the same iconic image still on display today at the temple that was, indeed, built in her honor (36).

However, I argue, whether or not the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego in December of 1531 actually occurred is of little importance, for as Jeanette Rodriguez (1994) eloquently states, “the fact of the apparition matters less than the fact of their faith” (xxix). The significance of the apparition is not dependent upon any quest for historical validity; rather, the significance rests upon its symbolism. It is not facts or evidence that make Guadalupe an integral part of the Mexican Catholic narrative; rather,

it is the strength of her believers' convictions of all she represents. The Holy Mother – a Catholic figure – appeared to an indigenous farmer by taking upon herself the darker skin of the conquered peoples and approaching Juan Diego as someone similar in appearance to himself. In doing so, she not only acknowledged the struggles of the Spanish conquest, but more importantly acknowledged the indigenous as people worthy and deserving of respect, love, and compassion. The conviction of Guadalupean devotion, as such, is a form of knowing that cannot be gained from analysis or textual study – it is a knowledge that is produced and drawn upon by a community that shares a social and cultural understanding of who Guadalupe is, and what (and who) she represents.

Furthermore, viewing Guadalupe as a blend of two contrasting cultures and religious systems influences the psychological effects of the encounter and reinforces devotees' faith that Guadalupe is one of their own. Indeed, Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) describes Guadalupe as

A synthesis of the old world and the new, of the religion and culture of the two races in our psyche, the conquerors and the conquered... our faith is rooted in indigenous attributes, images, symbols, magic and myth. Because *Guadalupe* took upon herself the psychological and physical devastation of the conquered and oppressed *indio*, she is our spiritual, political, and psychological symbol (52).

The Virgin of Guadalupe, from the first encounter, addresses Juan Diego by name – her first words to him, according to Daniel Groody (2002), are: “Dignified Juan, dignified Juan Diego” (121). She appeared as an indigenous woman to an indigenous man, speaking his language, reflecting religious symbols he would have recognized.

Guadalupe appeared to Juan as someone he could trust, someone who recognized him

and in whom he was able to recognize himself. Daniel Groody (2002) elaborates on this trusting relationship:

She [Guadalupe] entered into tender conversation with him and believed in him even when he could not believe in himself. She was patient with him, never scolding and never threatening. Even when he felt totally inadequate, she trusted him with a great mission. Juan Diego, in turn, found himself totally re-created, ennobled, and dignified. In short, he saw himself – probably for the first time since the conquest – as a human being (126).

Jeanette Rodriguez (1994) calls this encounter between The Virgin and Juan Diego “a conversation between equals” in which Guadalupe “is according him the dignity and respect of a person who has a right of choice” (42). Author Luis J. Rodríguez (1996) similarly elevates Juan Diego’s status when he writes that “through Juan Diego, the people’s deeds, the people’s dreams, the people’s stories, would be exalted” (132). In particular, I argue, those most similar to Juan Diego in the present day are the millions of undocumented Mexican immigrants living clandestinely in the United States. Though the old and new worlds Anzaldúa (1987, 52) mentions specifically reference Catholic Spain and indigenous Mexico, the synthesis can be broadened to include the old and new worlds of diasporic Mexicans. Juan Diego thus becomes not merely a figure in a story, but a representation of migrants’ struggles for dignity.

Jeanette Rodriguez (1996) argues that “Mary’s cult appeals strongly to the oppressed because she gives dignity to downtrodden people” (27-8). Her appearance to an indigenous man – indeed, a poor agricultural farmer, much like many undocumented migrants – gives legitimacy to a historically marginalized group, and just as Juan Diego found reassurance in Guadalupe’s words, so too do Mexicans, living far from their families and communities, feel able to confide in her their hopes, dreams, and fears. As

Daniel Groody (2002) explains, “To them, she is the one they often turn to in time of need. She is the one who hears their cries and afflictions. She is the one who helps them in their trials” (115). Further, her acceptance of Juan Diego equals a broader “acceptance of the rejected, the welcoming of the unwanted, the cleansing of the soiled, the healing of the broken, and the uplifting of the downtrodden” (125). Migrants, like Juan Diego, experience mistrust, fear, apprehension, uncertainty, and the alienation of being a stranger in a strange land. Rubén Martínez (1996) speculates that “perhaps it’s [because of] the yearning to remain rooted in a rootless time” that devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe remains so strong in diaspora and during the migratory process (111). As a symbol of strength and dignity for the oppressed, to question whether or not Guadalupe would support migrants so devoted to her would be to question not only hundreds of years of tradition – it would be to question migrants’ own faith and resolve, and, as Alyshia Gálvez (2010) states, it “would be to question her” (81).

Doubt, however, provides us with a critical metaphor in further understanding the parallels between Juan Diego and undocumented migrants. Just as Bishop Zumárraga doubted Juan Diego and the story he proclaimed, in our present time it is the immigration authorities, the politicians and policy makers, the unconcerned public, and “people who have not yet seen the truth or need help in recognizing it” (Gálvez 2010, 80) that either doubt or willingly ignore the dignity and perseverance of the undocumented. Both Juan Diego and, as we shall see, undocumented migrants, place their faith in Guadalupe, and she, in turn, affirms their humanity. Just as Juan Diego transcended the conventional borders of his time, so too does Guadalupe – and the migrants who have faith in her –

transcend cultural, social, and national borders to “ignore the political demarcations” between nations (Martínez 1996, 101).

As such a metaphor, the Virgin of Guadalupe becomes a familiar symbol upon which migrants draw during all stages of their journey. Many regions of Mexico have their own popular religious figure, most of which are variations on, or aspects of, images of Jesus or the Virgin Mary (Hagan 2008b, 26). Although the Basílica de Guadalupe in Mexico City is the most popular pilgrimage site in the country, many Mexican states, such as Guanajuato, Jalisco, and San Luis Potosí have their own sites of veneration to their own images of the Virgin, including one image of Guadalupe based in Jalisco known as La Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos. Indeed, as will be examined in detail in the following chapter, migrants who create images known as *retablos* often portray La Virgen de los Lagos, as she serves as a familiar, place-specific icon upon whom they can call in times of need. However, regardless of which image she takes, the Virgin’s importance among migrants, potential migrants, and their families is unmistakable.

Jacqueline Hagan (2008b) discovered that, in her study of 202 undocumented migrants, 74 percent (n=147) identified as Catholic, and, more telling, “25 percent of Catholic migrants from Mexico sought religious counsel through private prayer to the Virgin of Guadalupe” (26). Migrants turn to religion, both in personal practice and through institutions, for reassurance and hope to prepare for and endure the psychological traumas of the migration process, precisely because religion and faith are familiar and such an inseparable part of their daily lives. Lynnaire M. Sheridan (2009) refers to prayer and faith as “risk reduction” strategies because they “lower migrants’ perceptions of

danger and break down psychological barriers to migration” (147-8). Faith can also be a risk reduction strategy simply because it offers hope and comfort when it is needed most. However, faith serves as a sustaining resource not only due to its psychological benefits, but by its informational and networking benefits, as well. I turn now to examining how faith, through institutional religion, serves as cultural capital to migrants that allows them a greater degree of access to the benefits associated with social capital.

Leah Sarat (2013) writes that “Popular Catholicism emerged in rural Mexico at a time when bonds of solidarity between neighbors were essential for survival” (60). These communal bonds, such as relationships between friends, neighbors, and family members, form the most basic social institutions that can serve as cultural capital and provide community or family members with some form of social standing. This is especially important in Mexico when considering that religious life and devotional activities, as mentioned above, are based primarily around the spaces of home and community. However, as migrants prepare to leave for the United States, and even when they settle in the north, their involvement with and in the Church increases, especially, as Alyshia Gálvez (2010) notes, due to their undocumented status, religious migrants view the Church as one of the few social spaces available and open to them (89).

As discussed above, migrants and their families rely on such religious resources as institutional beliefs, personal faith, popular devotional images, and daily spiritual practices. However, in preparing for the migratory journey, they begin to rely more heavily on the advice of and resources available from clergy members. The Church, as a social institution, is able to link migrants both psychologically and practically into further

social networks. As we have seen, 67 percent of the respondents in Jacqueline Hagan's (2008b) study reported attending Church services at least once per week, if not multiple times (16). As a result, as Scott M. Myers (2000) explains, "research finds that frequent churchgoers value religion highly and report larger social networks, more contact with network members, more types of social support received, and more favorable perceptions of the quality of their social networks" (759). It is not simply a matter of knowing more migrants or potential migrants, however – Hagan (2008b) found the connection between churches and social networks to be so closely intertwined that she described them as being inherently linked to the "social infrastructure" of migratory routes to the point that *coyotes* even entrust the migrants they guide to their care (94). And like the intricate web formed by these networks, the benefits flow both ways. Forty-three percent of migrants in Hagan's (2008b) sample, for instance, learned of religious-based or clergy-operated migrant shelters through their social networks (94) – an example of cultural capital (the institution of the Church) being converted into social capital (journey-related resources).

That the Church would have such a clear connection to the issue of transnational migration speaks to how deeply it has become a part of the fabric of daily life. While much of daily religious practice may indeed be based around the home, clergy members such as parish priests offer both emotional support and instrumental resources for migrants preparing for their journeys. Four out of every five migrants in Hagan's (2008b) study sought some form of religious counsel prior to leaving, including through personal prayer or petitions to religious icons (21). However, one out of every five migrants turned to clergy for support in their decision-making after offering individual prayers. Clergy are

not only able to administer blessings to departing migrants, but can also provide practical advice such as “safe crossing routes, their rights if apprehended by officials, and verbal or written documentation about the location of legal aid services and migrant shelters along the migrant trail” (28). Indeed, because of the resources they are able to provide, Hagan (2008b) refers to the Church functioning in this capacity as “institutional informants” (113). Migrants are able to purchase religious items such as medallions imprinted with an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, rosaries, prayer cards, and the *Devocionario del Migrante* (the Migrants Prayer Book), the most popular item purchased at the most popular pilgrimage site in Mexico: the Basílica de Guadalupe in Mexico City (Hagan 2008a, 10).

The *Devocionario del Migrante* serves as a spiritual resource as well as a practical one. Measuring roughly 4x3 inches and weighing next to nothing, it is small enough to fit inside a migrant’s pocket without taking up much additional space migrants need for carrying other items such as food and water. While the *Devocionario* includes a *Pequeño directorio del Migrante* (small migrants’ directory) of migrant shelters located in border cities such as Tijuana, Mexicali, Tecate, and Ciudad Juarez, the *Devocionario* mainly features a variety of *oraciones para diversas circunstancias* (devotions for various circumstances), including: *En el viaje hacia el Norte* (on the journey North); *Al ser encarcelado o deportado* (on being imprisoned or deported); *Cuando se busca trabajo* (when looking for work); and *Cuando no se puede ir a Misa* (when you cannot go to Mass). The *Devocionario* also includes a specific *Rosario del Migrante* (Migrant’s Rosary), which includes litanies such as:

*Santa María.
Santa Madre de Dios.
Señora que acogiste al Espíritu Santo.
Señora de todos los caminos.
Señora de todas las razas.
Señora de todos los idiomas,
Consuelo de todas las familias.
Esperanza de todos los países,
Reina de los continentes.
Virgen servidora y fiel.
Virgen humilde y pobre como nosotros.
Santuario del que es la Vida.
Refugio en la salida y en el regreso.
Señora de los migrantes.
Madre de los caminantes y peregrinos.
Madre de los discriminados.
Madre de los perseguidos.
Madre de los refugiados y deportados.
Madre de los extranjeros.
Madre de los indígenas.
Madre de los indocumentados.*

Holy Mother.
Holy Mother of God.
Lady who welcomed the Holy Spirit.
Lady of all roads.
Lady of all races.
Lady of all languages,
Comfort of all families.
Hope of all countries,
Queen of the continents.
Virgin servant and faithful.
Virgin humble and poor like us.
Sanctuary of which is Life.
Shelter on departure and return.
Lady of the migrants.
Mother of walkers and pilgrims.
Mother of the discriminated.
Mother of the persecuted.
Mother of refugees and deportees.
Mother of the foreigners.
Mother of the indigenous.
Mother of the undocumented.

(Trinidad Sepúlveda, Obispo de San Juan de los Lagos; translated by S. White).

The Devocionario highlights believers' devotion to and reverence for the Holy Mother and links her quite clearly with migrants' concerns and fears, but it also speaks to a much larger phenomenon. Hagan (2008b) reported from her findings that "nine out of ten migrants... practiced religion to help them cope with the journey north" (116). Seventy-eight percent said they prayed for protection along their journey (Hagan 2008b, 34), but many have also recalled praying for help in securing a reliable and safe *coyote*, the acquisition of travel funds, care for family members left behind in Mexico, and an easy adjustment to life in the United States (Hagan 2008a, 8). A frequent prayer takes the form of what is known as a *promesa*, "a covenant between the believer and a sacred image [such as the Virgin of Guadalupe]. In exchange for divine intervention or granting of a request, the believer promises to perform certain acts, usually devotional, in gratitude". Three out of every four undocumented migrants in the sample recalled making *promesas*, and half of the study sample recalled specifically making *promesas* in exchange for safe passage to the United States, although many others promised to be better Christians, to give thanks at a Church upon safe arrival, to return home someday in the future to give thanks at a shrine, or to do something to benefit their home community (Hagan 2008b, 53). One migrant from Jalisco named Hernando, for example, made a pilgrimage to the shrine of La Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos and "vowed to La Virgen that if she permitted him a safe journey, he would honor her for the rest of his life" (20-1). A nineteen-year-old named Cecilia from Puebla, Mexico purchased flowers and *veladora* candles of the Virgin of Guadalupe and brought them to her local priest for blessing. The priest gave her a prayer card with an image of the Virgin, blessed them, and

gave them words of advice to work hard and make their community proud. Upon Cecilia's departure, Cecilia's mother lit the candles and only extinguished them once Cecilia had called her to let her mother know that she had arrived safely (35-6).

Migrants' personal faith and religious convictions offer them much needed psychological support in preparing for their journey, and they increasingly rely on religious institutions for spiritual as well as practical advice. This chapter examined how migrants' spirituality serves as a resource during the migratory process. I pay close attention to the significance of the Virgin of Guadalupe not only because of her centrality within Mexican faith, but also because of the symbolism her encounter with Juan Diego offers for understanding her significance for migrants in the 21st century. I further explored how migrants' faith links them into social networks through cultural capital, and how cultural capital leads to an increase in social capital. Only by examining the origins and strength of Mexican spirituality, and the connection between faith and capital, can we adequately prepare to analyze what Elaine A. Peña (2011) terms "devotional capital" (11), a resource to which I now turn.

Devotion in Diaspora: Faith as ‘Devotional Capital’

The previous chapter analyzed how faith serves as a resource for migrants as they prepare for and undertake the migratory journey. I argued that migrants’ faith links them into social networks through cultural capital by their reliance upon various levels of institutions, from the basic institution of their home communities to larger institutions such as the Catholic Church. This chapter expands upon the notion of faith as capital by examining specific instances of migrants’ devotion in diaspora, emphasizing the strength of faith through transnational ties, communal observances, and personal piety. To do so, I rely on previously published data, including Elaine A. Peña’s *Performing Piety* and the example of the Second Tepeyac of North America; Alyshia Gálvez’s *Guadalupe in New York*, which highlights the event known as La Antorcha Guadalupana and its significance for transnational migrants; Paul DiMaggio and Patricia Fernández-Kelly’s edited volume *Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities*; and Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey’s *Miracles on the Border: Retablos of Mexican Migrants to the United States*. Though these are but a few of the examples available to researchers, the inclusion of such diverse performances of devotion allows us to break out of the dichotomy of politicized discourse and to see the humanity of transnational migrants as well as the faith that sustains them.

Elaine A. Peña (2011) refers to devotion to Guadalupe as “devotional capital” and elaborates that this form of capital serves as “ways of remembering, knowing, interpreting, and coping” that define and shape daily lives (11). However, I would broaden her definition of devotional capital to refer not only to devotion to Guadalupe, but to any form of faith-based practice that assists migrants in preparing for and

undertaking their journey and adapting to life in the United States, as well as to the complexities and psychological burdens of transnational existence. Migrants in the United States rely upon religion to reinforce their spiritual and communal identities, to help stabilize their families psychologically, and especially to continue participating in the customs and traditions they had been involved in while in Mexico (Badillo 2006, 192). Some of the many examples of personal religious devotion include: recitation of traditional or improvised prayers; church attendance on Sundays, holy days or ethnic celebrations; giving alms or tithes to the church; and “sustaining sacred space” by the maintenance of home altars (Peña 2001, 12). Home altars often feature framed pictures or statues of the Virgin of Guadalupe or other aspects of Marian devotion, crucifixes and rosaries, personal family items such as photographs, and flowers. David Badillo (2006) explains the frequency of images of Guadalupe on home altars as symbolizing “more than others, the need for protection, whether for journeys, health, jobs, or the like” and further describes family altars as defining each family’s spiritual life, often “existing separately from the institutional church” (36). Such aspects of devotion speak to the prominence and resilience of the practices of Popular Catholicism, and how, as we shall see, this devotion spiritually sustains those living a transnational existence.

Jacqueline Hagan (2008b) recounts the story of a Honduran migrant woman named Perla, who stopped at La Basílica de Guadalupe in Mexico City and “beseeched the virgin to provide her with the necessary resources to continue her journey to the United States and vowed to honor her for safe passage” (136). After she arrived safely in Houston, Perla visited the city’s Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe and

Made the laborious and painful journey down the sanctuary's center aisle on her knees and then veered left to the overflowing shrine dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe. She paid her respects and among the thousands of votive objects left by pilgrims, placed her small, handwritten note of thanksgiving. Practicing this ritual of thanksgiving for a miracle enabled Perla to place value and meaning on her journey and to reconnect with what had been her world before migration and where she hoped one day to return (136).

Perla's *promesa* to the Virgin of Guadalupe and her act of thanksgiving are not unique, although Perla's example in particular allows us to see the extent of her devotion and the lengths she was willing to go to fulfill her promise. However, to Perla, her pain may have been of no importance at all. In her perception, and the perception of many migrants who make *promesas*, her promise and its fulfillment proved more important than her pain. Faith served as the source of Perla's strength, a strength which reveals the depth of her spirituality and dedication as an internalized, central component of her identity. Her utilization of cultural capital physically manifested in a form of bodily devotion, wherein Perla's body served as a means through which she understood her faith. Perla proves that faith forms a core part of a person's very being – in essence, serving as a form of cultural capital that allows one to determine for oneself his or her values and knowledge gained not from textual analysis, but learned and internalized through one's community.

Peña (2011) refers to fulfilling *promesas* and other physical enactments of faith as “devotional labor”, and elaborates that

By offering the Virgin their *devotional labor* (e.g. pilgrimage, prayer, song, dance, and shrine maintenance) adherents develop, preserve, sanctify, and connect not only spaces but also histories and traditions across several boundaries: geopolitical, social, and institutional (10).

I turn now to exploring a specific instance of devotional labor, one that maintains faith-based transnational ties and traditions: The Second Tepeyac of North America.

Recalling that it was on the hill of Tepeyac outside what is now Mexico City that the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to the indigenous farmer Juan Diego, for the Second Tepeyac to be declared in Des Plaines, Illinois speaks to the prominence of a number of factors, including devotees' performance of sacred traditions, maintenance of sacred space, and the power of faith itself. The Institute for Historical and Theological Worship for the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico City declared the Church of Maryville in Des Plaines to be the "Second Tepeyac of North America" in October of 2001. When a volunteer named Joaquín Martínez with the Church of Maryville requested a statue of Guadalupe from relatives in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, he initiated a series of exhibitions of the statue until its settlement at its new home at the Church. A few years later, Martínez began to envision the construction of a "Second Tepeyac" on the site and called upon architects to study the original Tepeyac's layout. A committee eventually decided to recreate the Jardín de la Ofrenda, the Offering Garden, deeming it best suitable for Illinois' space availability and devotees' wishes (Peña 2011, 32). By replicating multiple aspects of the garden's design, including statues of Juan Diego and the Virgin of Guadalupe, the layout of Second Tepayac became a "transnational strategy", solidifying "institutional ties between Mexico City and Des Plaines" and creating "dialogue among... [those] who may be separated by national borders" (33).

What makes Second Tepeyac a holy, sacred space is not any similar traditions of Marian apparition (none are reported on the second site), but, as one devotee explained it, "it only takes *un grano de arena* [one grain of sand]" (Peña 2011, 36). Not only would any piece, however small, from the original Tepeyac render the Second Tepeyac

legitimate, but furthermore, Peña (2011) also argues that sacred space can transcend man-made divisions like national borders, linking devotees in the United States with the original Tepeyac in Mexico in such a way that prioritizes their devotional connection over artificial borders (37). In essence, the sacredness of Second Tepeyac stems from its devotees' "embodied performances" and beliefs – "their voices raised in ecstasy, their praying and dancing bodies in motion, the labor and care they offer to maintain the shrine" all aid in inscribing "their histories, beliefs, and aspirations on the environment" (43).

However, a worthwhile distinction must be made between the original Tepeyac site in Mexico and the Second Tepeyac in Des Plaines, Illinois. At the Jardín de la Ofrenda in Tepeyac, Mexico City, the statue of La Virgen de Guadalupe faces the statue of Bishop Zumárraga, a symbol of institutional privilege and authority. At Second Tepeyac, the Virgin's statue faces Juan Diego. At Second Tepeyac, she faces the indigenous peasant farmer whose ethnic group has been conquered and marginalized (Peña 2011, 35). She faces the man who feels like an outsider, who doubts his own worth. By facing him, she restores to him his dignity. She recognizes his worth and inherent human value, especially when the authorities do not. In this instance, as with many other examples before, the uprooted migrants living in diaspora see themselves in the figure of Juan Diego.

Just as the symbolism behind Second Tepeyac connects diasporic Mexicans across nation-states, so too does the Antorcha Guadalupana, or the Guadalupean Torch Run. Initially started on October 29, 2002 at the Basílica de Guadalupe in Mexico City,

torch runners carry a flame over land to Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

After leaving the Basílica in Mexico City, the runners travel through the Mexican states of Puebla, Guerrero, Hidalgo, and Tlaxala – states from which many migrants have left for the United States. The route travels north, crossing through Texas, up the southern United States, past the White House, and on to New York City (Gálvez 2010, 150). The flame is carried in Mexico by the relatives of migrants living in the U.S., who then acquire the torch once it crosses the border.

As a binational event, the torch runs involve many levels of reliance upon social capital, linking immigrants in the United States to their families and friends in their hometowns in Mexico. Traditionally, as Alyshia Gálvez (2010) explains, torch runs were pre-Columbian methods of relaying religious and cultural information rapidly (142). La Antorcha Guadalupana, specifically, acts in this manner as a form of *guadalupanismo* in which Guadalupe carries a message “for the people divided by a border”, for the migrants themselves and for their families left behind, but also for the policymakers in Washington to heed the call for immigration reform (149). Indeed, as many torch runners in the United States are undocumented, the Antorcha Guadalupana, like the symbolism at Second Tepeyac, transforms runners into a 21st century Juan Diego:

Like Saint Juan Diego, who knocked on the doors of the Bishop, imploring him to heed the request Guadalupe had entrusted to him, Mexican immigrants in the United States are knocking on the doors of the authorities, asking them to grant them the rights and dignity they deserve (Gálvez 2010, 149).

Gálvez (2010) explicitly elaborates that this transformation “of runners into so many Juan Diegos” was “the principal goal and result of the run” (155). Although she acknowledges that many participants were either unaware or unconcerned with the political implications

of the run (such as advocating for immigrant rights), she stresses that many joined simply out of devotion to the Virgin. That the run involves physical labor, time away from work, and the risk of apprehension by authorities (especially in the case of runners without legal documents) seemed to be of little concern. What matters, above all, is devotion to Guadalupe. What matters is the strength of their devotion. What matters is the social and cultural bonds that these events create and sustain, by not only providing an avenue for participants' *promesas* and other forms of piety, but also by reaffirming their ethnic ties, their national origins, and their struggle for dignity and the need to return the care that Guadalupe has shown to them. La Antorcha Guadalupana serves as devotional capital by the necessary reliance on social and cultural capital as well as by the performance of devotional labor that inherently connects participants across transnational boundaries.

However, devotional capital manifests through more than symbolism. The role of art and physical images within transnational communities also serves as devotional capital by providing migrants and their families with physical objects upon which they can project their fears, hopes, dreams, and prayers of gratitude. As Paul DiMaggio and Patricia Fernández-Kelly (2010) explain:

The arts serve a variety of functions for the migrant men and women who create and consume them: they provide the comfort of familiarity, helping them to interpret personal experience; they communicate about the old world to the young; and they serve as foci of rituals of solidarity and communion that bring immigrants together (2).

Furthermore, as one of their subtitles explicitly states, art serves as “a window into the immigrant experience”, and, simultaneously, immigration can serve “as a window into the arts” (21). Art, like the phenomenon of transnational migration, emerges from

specific contexts and communities and reflects the concerns of those communities, serving as an example of cultural capital taking on a material, physical form.

Especially in terms of religious devotion, as Jeanette Rodriguez (1994) argues, images can either express devotees' feelings or compensate for their doubts and uncertainties (48). The arts, in combination with religious expression and belief, "are the principal cultural forms to which migrants appeal" (DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly 2010, 8). Indeed, as DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly (2010) affirm, "art and religion are among the very few refuges to which impoverished, dislocated, and marginal peoples can turn in the search for respect... religious and artistic expression" enables "individuals and groups to... facilitate new forms of sociability that bring immigrants into contact with material and human resources" (7). Art, then, like religion, serves as devotional capital in two ways: by acting as a resource migrants can draw upon for assistance in adaptation and adjustment, as well as guiding them into further circles of social and cultural capital. I turn now to examining a specific form of religious and devotional art known as *retablos*.

Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey (1995) describe *retablos* as "objects left before sacred images at popular pilgrimage sites" (19). They are "colorful paintings on sheets of tin" that "tell the story of a dangerous or threatening event from which the subject has been miraculously delivered through the intervention of a holy image of Christ, the Virgin, or the saints, to whom thanks are reverently offered" (2). *Retablos* are sometimes referred to as "ex-votos", a Latin term meaning "from a vow", indicating that the paintings are "tokens of payment for divine favors sought or received" (9). Durand

and Massey (2010) link the practice of creating and utilizing *retablos* to Popular Catholicism, practiced by everyday people, often outside the formal sanction of the Catholic Church (215). They serve as religious and cultural devotions and act as confessions, testimonies, and expressions of gratitude. Many migrants, in particular, use or create *retablos* to “make sense of the alienating and disjointed experiences of life” in the United States (Durand and Massey 1995, 63). Furthermore, *retablos* “provide an immediate record of migrants’ most pressing concerns”, allowing us insight into the migratory experience (Durand and Massey 2010, 219). This insight is critical considering that many migrants do not speak openly about their journeys and experiences. That they are able to confide in an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, for example, speaks to how strongly they believe in and rely upon her.

Retablos usually include three basic components: a divine image who intervened on behalf of the devotee, such as Christ or the Virgin; a physical depiction of the event itself, and accompanying text explaining the situation and expressing the devotees’ gratitude (Durand and Massey 2010, 216). Although they vary in size, due to the detail needed to work on them and the inclusion of these characteristics, the average sizes of *retablos* are 10x14 inches and 7x10 inches. Retablos made by migrants often deal, appropriately, with migration-related concerns, such as undertaking the migratory journey, facing medical issues while in the United States, and adapting to life in the north. Durand and Massey (1995) analyzed *retablos* by the frequency of images made to aspects of the Virgin, including localized aspects such as the Virgin of Zapopan, the Virgin of Talpa, and the Virgin of San Juan de los Lagos. Accompanying texts often

begin with “*doy gracias* / I give thanks” and express that “*me encomendé a la Virgen* / I entrusted myself to the Virgin... *me concedió el milagro* / she granted me the miracle” (24). Of 124 retablos catalogued, Durand and Massey (1995) include 40 for analysis in their work *Miracles on the Border* – they discovered that 60 percent (n=27) of the included images consisted of that of La Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos (85). Within the study of the complete collection (n=124), however, they concluded that 60 percent of all *retablos* studied included devotional imagery of the Virgin Mary – a steep contrast to images of Christ, which numbered only at 28.7 percent (69).

The retablo of Bernabé H. And Catarina V, from 1944, features both the image of the Virgin of San Juan as well as the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in praying for his (Bernabé’s) health (Durand and Massey 1995, 154). Figure 10, from Isidro Rosas Rivera in 1976, begins his *retablo* with the words, “My Mother of San Juan de los Lagos”. He gives thanks for allowing him safe passage to Brownsville, Texas, and refers to her again as the “Miraculous Little Virgin” (142). Figure 7, from María Esther Tapia Picón (undated), gives thanks similarly to the Virgin of San Juan “for saving us from the migration authorities on our way to Los Angeles (136). Figure 6 is one made by a man named Braulio Barrientos in 1986, found at the Sanctuary of San Juan de los Lagos. He writes:

On this date I dedicate the present retablo to the Virgin of San Juan for the clear miracle she granted on the date of June 5, 1986. Re-emigrating to the United States with three friends, the water we were carrying ran out. Traveling in such great heat and with such thirst, and without hope of drinking even a little water, we invoked the Virgin of San Juan and were able to arrive at our destination and return to our homeland in health. In eternal gratitude to the Virgin of San Juan de los Lagos from the place where you find Braulio Barrientos (134).

These images speak not simply about migrants' devotion to the Virgin, through whichever aspect she takes, but also of the lengths they will go to show their devotion. While many such as Perla (whose story is included above) give thanks upon arrival in the United States, the creation of *retablos* speaks to the strength of migrants' ties to their homeland and the desire to return, whether to visit family or make a pilgrimage and fulfill a *promesa*. By providing us with insight into migrants' most pressing concerns, we begin to understand that their reliance on their faith and spirituality as a resource is not merely psychological, but practical. They turn to familiar images and symbols that are part of their daily lives.

Interestingly, upon examining Durand and Massey's (2010) research on *retablos* found in Western Mexico, the number of migrants who made *retablos* for "getting by in the U.S." has significantly decreased: between 1900-1939, this subject composed 50 percent of the *retablos* in their study sample. During the Bracero Era, from 1940-1964, the number fell to 33.3 percent, and in the "modern era" from 1980 onward, the figure is at 22 percent (226). Likewise, the percentage of *retablos* made as thanks for "making the trip" also decreased, most drastically from the Bracero Era at 22.2 percent to 12.2 percent in the modern era (226).

This decline in *retablos* for "getting by in the U.S." and "making the trip", I propose, is indicative of policy changes and the subsequent reliance on capital. As I have highlighted, the increased militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border has directly led to an increase in migrants' reliance on networks while undertaking the journey, finding U.S. employment, and adjusting to life away from home. The more migrants rely on networks

of capital, and the more they feel confident and assured of the security of their support (either human or divine), the less they will experience anxiety and stress over the migratory process (although this anxiety and stress is never entirely absent). The decrease in *retablos* as thanks for divine intervention may, then, perhaps be viewed as a natural outcome of social networks increasing in number and necessity, thereby alleviating the uncertainty of the details of a border crossing trip and settlement.

However, the decline in *retablos* may also be explained by the frequency of making *promesas*. As an example of personal religious devotion, *promesas* allow migrants to personalize their gratitude in a much more accessible manner. *Retablos*, for example, require the devotee to gather artistic materials or to pay monetary capital for another artist to depict their experiences. In Perla's case, after having just arrived in the United States, she possessed limited monetary capital and instead relied upon her devotional capital that formed a central component of her identity, manifested through bodily devotion. This type of devotional capital requires resources found not within social networks or institutional groups, but within individual migrants' own resolve and commitment.

Retablos are examples of faith materialized into the physical: they are created for specific situations and intentions, and rather than merely serving an aesthetical purpose, the motives for their creation frequently depict life-changing, concrete concerns. The act of creating and utilizing *retablos*, much like the honoring of *promesas*, are instances of devotional capital that highlight the exchanges occurring between devotees and holy icons. With *retablos*, the exchange is one of thanksgiving in return for safe passage to the

north, for the miracle of water in the desert, or for safety from the watchful eyes of immigration authorities. *Promesas*, however, are examples of exchange in the form of promises for aid not yet received, with the promises being fulfilled once their petitions have been granted. Migrants have faith in the Virgin because, they believe, she has always had faith in them – thus, they have faith that she will provide for them, that she will side with them in their struggles, that she will care for them on their journeys, and that they will not fail to reciprocate that faith by honoring her. Spirituality sustains migrants, even during the most difficult and deadly of times – a topic to which I now turn.

Gregory L. Hess, the Chief Medical Examiner for Pima County, Arizona whose office processes and seeks to identify the bodies of border crossers who perish in the Tucson Sector, writes that “from 2001-2011, 1,911 foreign nationals who have died in the deserts of Southern Arizona have passed through the doors of the Pima County Forensic Science Center” (Hess 2012, 7). Jonathan Hollingsworth’s (2012) *Left Behind* showcases some of the items these migrants carried with them. By examining their personal effects, researchers hope to be able to identify them and return their bodies home to their families. However, as with *retablos*, they also allow us to see the items migrants bring with them on the dangerous journey, and what the choices of these items says about migrants’ faith and spirituality.

Left Behind provides a photographic record of these personal items, and further serves to personalize an otherwise politicized discourse surrounding the border region and undocumented immigration. Hollingsworth (2012) documents the work stations the

examiners use, the binders containing decades of case files, the autopsy room, and the plastic sleeves into which migrants' personal effects are stored until their remains can be identified. Of the 28 sleeves photographed for *Left Behind*, 9 sleeves (or 32 percent) contained some form of religious object(s). In total, there are represented: two crosses, three rosaries, six depictions of Mary (five of which are the Virgin of Guadalupe), twelve images of Christ or saints, fifteen prayer or devotional cards, and one bracelet consisting entirely of beads with Guadalupe's image.

While case ML11-01245 includes a woven cross on string, case ML11-01146 includes a rosary with the image of Guadalupe (Hollingsworth 2012; 30-1, 44-5). Case ML11-00528 is that of a female migrant whose entirety of personal effects are religious in nature – one rosary and three devotional cards, one of which features a Marian image holding a child, presumably the infant Jesus (52-3). The effects of ML10-01138 contain one Guadalupe bracelet, one rosary, and a collection of at (at least three visible) prayer cards (68-9). The sleeve for ML10-00533 contains all prayer cards (n=6), two of which feature images of Guadalupe (72-3). One migrant named Cesario, as related in *Crossing with the Virgin*, came north to look for his daughter, Lucrecia, who had died in the Arizona desert. When he eventually found her, he was only able to identify her by the “amulet” she wore “to keep her safe” – a ring imprinted with the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe (Ferguson, Price, and Parks 2010, 65-6).

What can these findings tell us? What does it mean when a person's sole personal artifacts are religious in nature? What can this tell us about what matters most to migrants? Although some carried phone numbers, addresses, and identification cards, the

frequency of religious artifacts is too high a number to disregard. For migrants travelling into hostile terrain (environmentally, politically, and psychologically speaking), the carrying of religious items serves as a familiar resource upon which they can draw in times of need. Carrying rosaries, prayer cards, and crosses allows for migrants to rely upon their faith, especially when they feel as though they cannot rely on anyone else. Making *promesas*, participating in Antorcha runs, creating *retablos*, and carrying personal religious objects all act as forms of devotional capital that sustain migrants as they leave their homes, journey hundreds or thousands of miles, and attempt to adapt to life in the United States. And for them to do so with complete faith in the Virgin creates a transnational connection, both socially and culturally, that links them to perhaps the strongest connection they have: to the Virgin herself.

Daniel G. Groody (2002) writes that “Our Lady of Guadalupe speaks profoundly to many Mexicans, especially immigrants... very often they see something in the Guadalupe story that resembles their own story”, especially in the figure of Juan Diego (115). Jeanette Rodriguez (1996) concurs, asking “What message does Our Lady of Guadalupe offer...? That we are lovable and capable, that we belong, that we can grow and be transformed, and that there is a reason to live and a reason to hope” (29). Rubén Martínez goes even further, stating that because “she crosses so many borders – walls created and kept in place by [those]... who refuse to see we already live in a borderless time”, many have begun calling her “the Undocumented Virgin” (108). Indeed, “God chooses the oppressed of history – the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, *the alien*, the sick, the prisoner – and makes them the cornerstone” (De La Torre 2016, 157; emphasis

added). The undocumented migrant today is the cornerstone, the symbol, of the hazardous effects of our international policies.

Hollingsworth (2012), in his conclusion to *Left Behind*, describes the Pima County Forensic Science Center as a type of new Ellis Island, only instead of looking forward to the realization of dreams, the migrants who pass through the Center's doors face a destiny of "long, quiet waiting" (107). Between 1995 and 2006, an average of more than 350 migrant remains per year have been discovered in the deserts of the Southwest United States (Nevins 2008, 21). In the beginning of this work, I stated that *transnational migrant networks* have their origins in and respond directly to *transnational ties* and historical relationships between nation-states. This relationship can be described as one which facilitates the easy transfer of goods and product, but excludes the people who suffer from the effects of those same trade policies – excludes them to such the extend that every year, the United States increases the construction of a physical wall to distance itself from those it deems undesirable. By nature of its exclusionary principles and practices, the border "is a state-sanctioned system of violence: physical, environmental, economic, and cultural" (Davis 2002, x). The migratory phenomenon is inextricably connected to this system. Far from deterring migrants from crossing the border, the region's increased militarization has only succeeded in pushing migrants into the dangerous and deadly terrain of the Southwestern U.S., where they are dying in the thousands.

Jonathan Hollingsworth (2012) declares that "every sleeve [of personal effects] is someone's father or son, daughter or sister" (107). He not only reaffirms their humanity –

he emphasizes their social connections, reminding us that no migrant ever acts alone. They are connected to their families, to their friends, to their communities, to La Virgen, and to one another. It is my hope that, by examining their lives and struggles through the lenses of social, cultural, and devotional capital, we are better able to understand what leads them to make such painful choices and to undertake such a dangerous journey, and how they are able to do so with the faith that someone, human or divine, recognizes them for all of their worth, dignity, and inherent human value.

Conclusion

This work began by arguing that viewing transnational migration as an individual migrant's decision disregards the multi-layered contexts inherent in the historical relationship between migrants' sending and receiving countries and erases the structural policies that facilitate their migration, contexts from which migratory decisions, strategies, and patterns originate. I further argued that centering this discussion on individual actions renders invisible how these U.S. policies create transnational movements, and how state policies lead to the formation of intricate, transnational migrant networks. I explored how these networks are an exercise in the utilization of social and cultural capital, and how they assist potential migrants in preparing for their journey, leaving home, and crossing the border into the United States. But just as social capital and cultural capital assist migrants in their journey, I argued for viewing migrants' faith and spirituality as manifestations of devotional capital that not only serve as an invaluable resource, but also aid in linking migrants into social and cultural networks. I examined specific instances of devotional capital in diaspora, including The Second Tepeyac of North America, La Antorcha Guadalupana, and the creation of *retablos*. As I have shown, as the migration phenomenon has become increasingly widespread, the networks and resources available to migrants have interconnected with one another in a very specific and inextricable way.

As discussed previously, forms of capital may be exchanged for one another, a phenomenon which Bourdieu termed "the economy of practices". One such example is the case of economic capital being exchanged for social capital through the purchase of a

reliable *coyote*'s services, who accepts the exchange in order to maintain a semblance of professional credibility, an exchange which David Spener (2009) specified as the "economy of *coyotaje* practices" (164). William A. Kandel (2004) similarly referred to this type of exchange as "migration-specific human capital" and argued that the "skills and abilities" garnered through migration "render a person better able to cross the border, find housing, and obtain a U.S. job" – the cultural capital of U.S. experience exchanged for social capital of border crossing resources (246). Furthermore, migrants preparing to make the journey north are able to meet with clergy members and purchase devotional books, both of which provide migrants with spiritual resources and practical information, such as the location of religiously-operated migrant shelters. However, while these instances present specific examples of the exchanges of capital, I argue for the creation of a broader and yet specifically migration-related term for Bourdieu's theory that encompasses all capital exchanges during the migratory process, not simply an instance-related economy of service or capital-specific practice. I propose a *migration-specific economy of practices* that includes the exchange of economic, social, cultural, or devotional capital across the spectrum, from instances including, but certainly not limited to: social networking, religious consultations, *coyotaje* services, job connections or labor contracting, the making of *promesas*, the creating of *retablos*, or the purchasing of the Devocionario del Migrante. Proposing a migration-specific economy of practices ensures the inclusion of all forms of capital within migratory networks and recognizes that these networks facilitate the exchange of multiple forms of migration-related capital across social, cultural, economic, and devotional categories.

The increase and necessity of transnational migrant networks, as well as the migration-specific economy of practices that sustains them, are the result of international policies centered on the existence, maintenance, and militarization of a geographical boundary. Joseph Nevins (2002) articulates that, “While the boundary has always represented a line of control, one that contains the national body politic and regulates the flow of goods and peoples, there has long been a huge gap between this territorial state-centric ideal and the reality of a transnational world” (24). This boundary relies on the simultaneous forgetting and embracing of a transnational reality, a duality that exists “in a world of both supposedly self-contained nation-states and social relations that transcend national territory”, deciding who is and is not allowed to “belong” and determining how “people and places from either side of the line relate to one another” (Nevins 2008, 78). Viewing the U.S.-Mexico border as both a physical divide between nations as well as a social divide between cultures proves that border militarization and policy-making are displays and symbols of power – the power to include and exclude on legislative as well as social levels (Ngai 2006, 293; Nevins 2008, 77). The border thus becomes an agreement of those in power to *simultaneously* include and exclude, to serve as both a “line of control” and a “gateway”, accepting product and profit while closing the doors to those who create them (Nevins 2002, 12).

Mae Ngai (2004) argues that “immigration policy is constitutive of Americans’ understanding of national membership and citizenship, drawing lines of inclusion and exclusion that articulate desired composition – imagined if not necessarily realized – of the nation” (5). Similarly, Peter Schrag (2010) describes “the history of American

attitudes about immigration and immigration policy” as one of “a spiral of ambivalence and inconsistency, a sort of double helix, with the strands of welcome and rejection wound tightly around one another” (194), both at the level of individual citizens’ thoughts as well as in legislative practice. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, for example, did away with national origin quotas and shifted to (theoretically) favoring family unification, while refusing to acknowledge that the very act of migration itself disrupts family structures, especially when migrants are forced to do so without documents (Boehm 2012, 57) – a situation created and defined by the state through symbolic violence and displays of power. Ngai (2004) terms this acceptance/rejection duality as “a social reality and a legal impossibility” when “immigration restrictions produced the illegal alien as a new legal and political subject” (4). Any hope of a workable and humane U.S. immigration policy must, then, include recognition of how exactly the United States has directly contributed to transnational migration and that it “bears a certain amount of responsibility for the existence of international labor migrations” (Sassen 1989, 828).

So is all of this – border militarization and enforcement, state-constructed legal categories, hypocritical laws that disregard the daily realities of immigrants – really about a physical wall of separation between countries? Or is it about the presumed need to protect something more? Politicians, media outlets, and individuals place the blame for unauthorized immigration with the *coyotes* who lead them on their journeys. They place the blame on presumed levels of poverty that “push” migrants out of Mexico while the United States “pulls” them in. They place blame on the Mexican government for not

providing ample economic opportunities within Mexico, and they place the blame on U.S. employers for recruiting them. Never does the United States government factor into these discussions – “the receiving country is taken as a passive agent, one not implicated in the process of emigration” (Sassen 1998, 7). Placing the blame on individuals disregards the systematic, legislative forces which facilitated the normalization of undocumented migration in the first place. It removes the United States from the discussion in order to paint it as a victim, as a country being overrun and overwhelmed, distancing itself from any implications of involvement. We prefer to cling to this ideal of immigration to the United States occurring simply on the basis of the United States’ presumed superiority, or the view that “‘America’ is the object of global envy” (Ngai 2006, 293). And as individuals and groups, we continue to fail to question the reality behind this phenomenon because, as Akers Chacón and Davis (2006) eloquently state, “it is more convenient (and cheaper) to blame the victims than change the system” (187).

It is this convenience – and our insecurity – that allowed for the construction of a physical boundary wall between Mexico and the United States. In times of deep political, economic, or social crises, it is always more convenient to misplace blame rather than to critique our own actions. Undocumented immigrants, particularly immigrants from Mexico, have historically served this very purpose to the extent where, on a governmental level, the United States has pushed for greater boundary buildup and militarization. As Joseph Nevins (2010) argues, “Crises are not simply objective ‘facts’. A crisis has to be constructed as such, and believed by the intended audience” (94). The perception of an “immigration crisis” is but one such example of a crisis constructed out

of our own fears and misperceptions, and furthermore, one that is irrationally blamed on the very people who are responding to an even deeper set of crises that affect us, as well, albeit on a less drastic level. The difference is that we, as the receiving society, have not been the ones forced with the decision to migrate in order to provide our families with basic necessities. As such, without a willingness to observe and listen with respect, we will be unable to arrive at an understanding of the phenomenon of the mass movement of those who have no other choice.

The creation of the category of “illegal alien” is a direct result of U.S. border enforcement strategies that seek to encourage the transnational movement of goods and services, such as the dynamics of supply and demand in the agricultural sector, while simultaneously (and hypocritically) restricting the transnational movement of the people who respond to those dynamics (Davis 2002, xi; Massey and Sánchez R., 38; Nevins 2002, 11; Ngai 2004, 6). The transnational migratory networks that utilize migration-specific capital are a natural and necessary response to state-imposed policies. Migrants, rather than being passive recipients of forces outside their control, are active agents that respond to these forces with determination and hope, undertaking a journey that allows them control of their own destinies.

David Spener (2009) argues that we can understand such a response as a framework of the cause and effect of domination and resistance (25). Migrants rely upon transnational networks and the exchanges of capital in order to resist foreign policies that are removed from the daily realities of their lives. Migrants and their families living on both sides of the border are deeply influenced by transnational circumstances and define

home in a variety of ways, especially in home-as-family, where “‘home’ is imbued with contradictions, ambiguity, and ambivalence” (Boehm 2012, 51). Any laws that seek to impose control over transnational migrants while disregarding these complex transnational realities simultaneously disregard the humanity of migrants and the state-imposed actions that facilitate their movement in the first place.

Just as we must refrain from taking an individual-centered approach when discussing the causes and motivations behind undocumented migration, so too must we be careful of imposing this approach to migratory networks. Indeed, the very existence of migrant networks negates any implications of individuality. Everything is connected – we need only to be willing to understand the connection. We must understand that the social, cultural, economic, and devotional capital within migrant networks necessitates that those within these networks, including migrants, potential migrants, employers, *coyotes*, clergy members, and migrants’ friends and family members are all intricately connected to one another, and furthermore that each network member serves as a resource for others in a multitude of ways (Bankston 2014; 1, 10, 22). Moving out of this individual-centered approach requires, in Joseph Nevins’ (2008) words, “that we treat places and boundaries, and the people associated with them, as dynamic, fluid – as connected” (197). Though transnational networks aid in doing just that, it is, in particular, through faith and spirituality that migrants in diaspora remain connected and rooted to their homeland through such events as La Antorcha Guadalupana and the making of *promesas* that one day, when they return to Mexico, they will be able to fulfill their promises and offer their

devotional labor to the Virgin of Guadalupe, upon whom they have relied to see them through the physical and psychological hardships of their journey.

Viewing faith and spirituality in such a way adds to the conversation not by discussing what causes migrants to leave their homelands, but rather, what prepares and sustains them throughout the process. Faith, and expressions of faith, are as cultural as they are religious, and they offer migrants a further source of capital upon which they can draw in responding to their situations with perseverance, dignity, and hope. Indeed, as one theologian explained, “Because Jesus experienced the trauma of undocumented aliens, he is a savior who knows what it means to cross a border. For me, the miracle of the incarnation is not that God became human, but rather that God became an alien” (De La Torre 2009, 134). Faith is not an abstract concept, a part-time identity put on once per week at Sunday service. For many migrants, faith is an inextricable part of their identity and is inseparable from their lives. To disregard the roles that faith and devotion play in the lives of transnational migrants, therefore, would be to disregard migrants’ very identity and humanity.

Our discussions should not revolve around such as questions as “Are immigrants good or bad for the United States”? Not only does this question presume that the immigrant reality can be summarized by their productivity or benefit – it further assumes, by default, that there exists that social boundary as discussed above that divides “us” and “them”. In the words of Mae M. Ngai (2006), “it takes as its premise that immigrants are not a part of ‘us’ ... further, the question assumes that ‘we’ have a singular interest above and against the interest of ‘them’” (292). In writing on the rise of migrant deaths in the

aftermath of increased border enforcement, Kathryn Ferguson, Norma A. Price, and Ted Parks (2010) state:

The problem is bigger than the question, ‘if vegetables can cross the border, why can’t humans’? It’s bigger than NAFTA... it is bigger than building a \$400 billion wall. It is bigger than immigration reform... the problem is that the deaths on our Arizona desert are a result of a suffocating, nonfunctioning concept of ‘my world is better than your world’ (207).

It is the existence of this physical and psychological border, this practice of inclusion and exclusion, this assumption of presumed superiority, and this disregard for the consequences of policies that cause so many migrants to die in their attempts to make it to the United States. Furthermore, as Nevins (2008) argues, “that such a point is so rarely made speaks to how hegemonic, accepted, uncontroversial, ‘natural’ – and thus invisible... the boundary and its associated practices and identities have become” (168-9).

It is Miguel A. De La Torre (2016), however, that sums up the migratory phenomenon succinctly: “whenever one nation builds roads into another nation to steal their cheap labor and natural resources, we should not be surprised when the inhabitants of those nations take those same roads and follow all that has been stolen from them” (33).

That transnational migration has become a fact of life for many communities speaks to a modern worldview characterized by active resistance rather than passive acceptance, an attitude based on the struggle to make sense of and derive meaning from our world and our circumstances (Seidman 1983, 268). Transnational migration is a modern phenomenon in the sense that those who undertake the migratory journey actively rationalize the risks and costs of their decisions and make the decision to migrate

as a response to conditions outside of their control. Migration is a means to regain that control, to decide one's and one's family's destiny.

However, circles of social, cultural, and especially devotional capital put what is known as the "modernity theory" into question. As Seidman (1983) argues, sociologist Max Weber characterized the modern world as one in which "the secular world view... is antithetical to the religious postulate of a meaningful cosmos" and, furthermore, that a secular world view would eclipse a religious one (268). Weber maintained that

As culture is intellectualized it devalues religion and, in turn, is devalued by religion. This renders religion increasingly powerless as a meaning system securing personal identity and social solidarity. Stated succinctly, Weber's argument is as follows. As the secular-scientific ethos permeates the culture and psychology of modernity, religion is pushed into the realm of the irrational (269).

Although migrants undertake a modern approach in their active response to their circumstances, they simultaneously disprove Weber's hypothesis on religion. As I have shown, Mexican migrants rely on both culture and religion as resources during their journey in psychological and physical ways. Moreover, for many migrants, culture and religion are two aspects of their identity that cannot be separated, either from each other or from migrants' identities themselves. Religion is, in absolutely no sense, devalued by culture, just as culture is in no sense devalued by religion. In fact, the opposite appears to be the case: religion and culture reinforce one another. The Virgin of Guadalupe provides perhaps the most powerful example of the interconnectedness of culture, faith, and personal identity. She serves as a spiritual resource for migrants on every aspect of their journey, and she reaffirms their dignity, their courage, and their worth. Weber believed that an intellectualized culture rendered religion powerless. Migrants, however, by their

rationalized decisions to migrate and re-take control of their lives and their simultaneous, unshakable convictions of the strength of their faith and their reliance upon it, undoubtedly proved Weber wrong.

As Joseph Nevins (2008) so pointedly reminds us, “life... is not simply biological existence” (171). We must no longer be content with viewing transnational migration as a step on the journey towards realizing some form of the ‘American Dream’. As Judith Adler Hellman (2008) asks:

Are they really determined – as so much of the policy discussion in the United States presupposes – to realize the American Dream? Or is there another dream, perhaps a Mexican Dream, that looks quite different from the aspirations so often attributed to the Mexicans we encounter in the United States? (10).

A Mexican Dream, as Leah Sarat (2013) argues, is the realization of a sustainable future – a future in which one can find ample opportunities in Mexico to support his or her family, and where families will no longer be separated by national borders (2). Perhaps a Mexican Dream sees the capital exchanges of transnational migrant networks as further bonds within and between communities in order to help them thrive within Mexico, a Mexico that encourages and supports all of its citizens in their search for dignity as well as social and economic justice.

Perhaps in the Mexican Dream, as Leah Sarat (2013) hopes, “migration will no longer be a necessity” (146).

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Vita

Sarah White received an M.A. in American Studies from Lehigh University in 2017, with a concentration in Latin American studies and immigration. Her work focuses on the intersection of history, sociology, and faith practices in creating and shaping the dynamics of Mexican migrant communities in the United States. She is the coordinator of an educational dialogue series, Moving Beyond Borders, on the myths and stereotypes surrounding the immigration phenomenon.